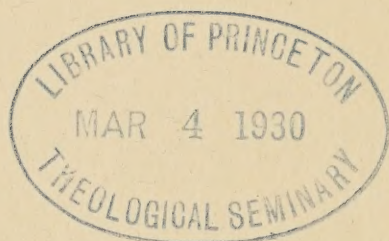


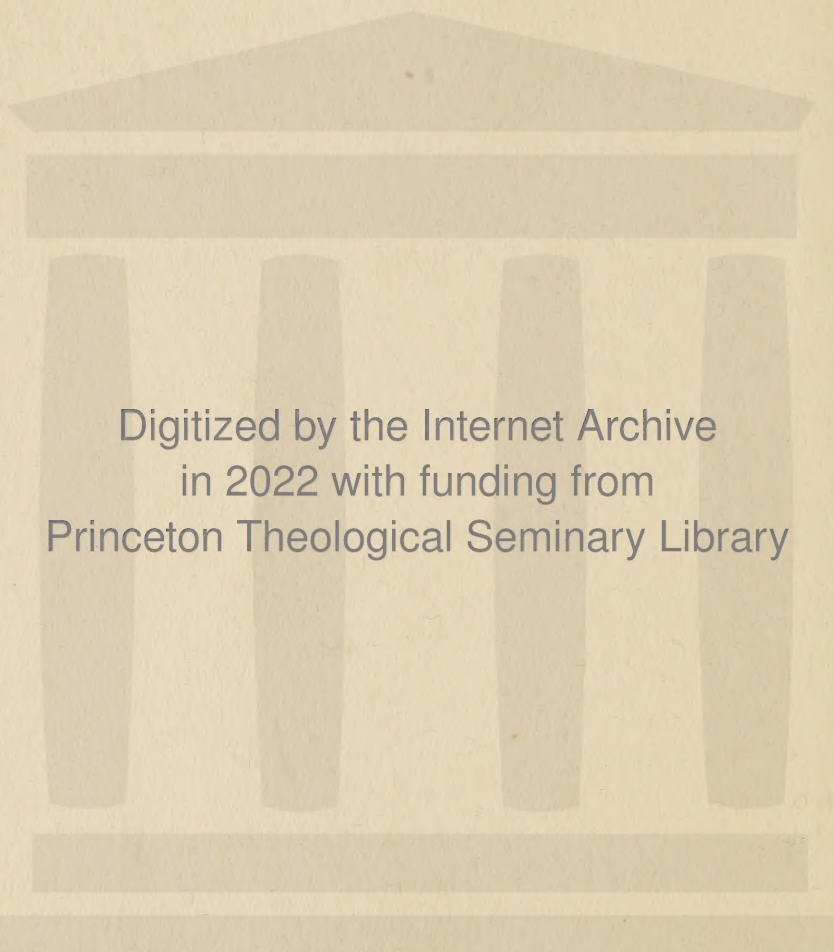
ASLEEP IN JESUS

BY

ABRAHAM KUYPER



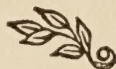
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Asleep in Jesus



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ASLEEP IN JESUS

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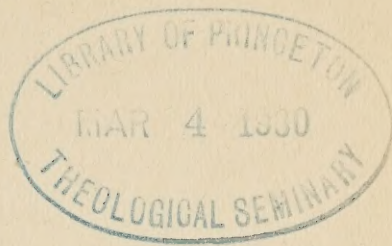
MEDITATIONS

by

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TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH BY
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Translator's Preface

GOD hath at no time left Himself without a witness in the world. And if it was the high calling of the witness to bear witness, it was the no less high calling of those who heard the witness, to extend its reach. That the Bible is now read in several hundred languages, shows to what extent the church of Christ, in all ages, has been awake to her privilege.

That Dr. Abraham Kuyper was a witness of "the Christ of the Scriptures," is the grateful acknowledgment of those who knew him at close range, and of those who are now making his acquaintance through his works. His "obedience to the heavenly vision" took one form in his "Meditations," in all of which the Bible was the sole arsenal from which he drew his ammunition. To extend the witness of "the Christ of the Scriptures," by this extraordinary man, beyond the confines of his mother-tongue, this volume of meditations on "Asleep In Jesus" in English dress is offered to the English-speaking Christian world.

As to the timeliness of the witness this book bears, consider, in the current number (May, 1929) of "The Atlantic Monthly" the striking words of the Rev. Dr. William L. Sullivan: "I feel that the extinction of the primary trust of the human soul in an eternal Perfection, an extinction preposterously asserted in the name of science, and preposterously compensated by a com-

fortable earthly paradise populated by the doomed, means the senility of civilization, the ruin of genius, and the decay of character."

To revive that "primary trust of the human soul in an eternal Perfection," to cheer it, to fan it into a bright flame again, these Meditations offer timely help. The "eternal Perfection" of the new life, which the Bible holds in prospect to all who believe on the Christ of the Scriptures, is here sketched, delineated, portrayed, with a faithfulness and affectionate appreciation, which, under Divine blessing, cannot but appeal to the heart of all such as "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Epiphany Rectory,
Walpole, Mass.,
May 8, 1929

Foreword

ART gives appearance no reality. It provides a semblance, which indeed aims higher than reality on earth can ever be, but always in such a way that the emotions art awakens in us, bear an altogether different character from those awakened in us by life itself.

A funeral march of Chopin, a noble rendering of the: *Like unto grass is our brief life*, makes a string of mournfulness vibrate in your heart, but grief that rends your heart, when you yourself stand by the bier of one of your precious pledges of love, cuts so differently and so much more deeply. Meditations on the sacred mystery of being asleep in Jesus therefore, can never strike the true note, so long as it is enticed merely from the sense of art. It wells up in holy melody from your heart only, when that heart, wounded by grief of its own has found comforting and reconciliation in the assurance whispered within, that he who went from you fell *asleep in Jesus*.

If then in the Meditations, which herewith go out in book form, a note is sounded, which affects one gratefully and attunes the mood to reverence, it explains itself purely from the grief experienced, which inspired it. In days of affliction of soul the heart struggles until in God it lifts itself above its bereavement. From a *de profundis* it raises itself through the *sursum corda* to a *gloria in excelsis*, and then: *Asleep in Jesus!* is an exclamation of triumph.

He who is called to writing and used to writing for the public, expresses this also for other ears, and so Meditations come within reach of many to good effect. All that the royal Harpist sang, was sung from his own grief or from his own delights. And though a far higher historic power inspired him, from a far distance it remains true among us, that literature for the heart succeeded best, when it found its origin in the experience of one's own soul.

Such was the case here, and for this reason, at the publication of this new volume I dare to foster the hope, that here something other and something better is offered than the *tasteless food*, which Job complained about with reference to his friends.

If there are others, whose heart must yet struggle through, what mine has struggled through, from these Meditations may there drip balsam for the wound of their soul.

The Hague, October 29, 1902

KUYPER

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ASLEEP IN JESUS

“Asleep in Jesus”

IN the valley of the shadow of death the great highway, on which people walk, *divides* itself, and continues on one side *upward* unto eternal life, and on the other with a declining path *downward* into eternal death.

Who, in the valley of death at this fork of the road, will be permitted to take the upward way to the Father-house, and *who* on the other hand will be forced to take the hollow way into the depth, is then no longer a matter of human choice.

This depends on how he fell asleep or expired. We like to defer this dreadful moment of final dying as far as possible. Back of the dying which we witness. When the body loses its blood-warmth, and thus the separation between soul and body by God is completed. And this can only come to pass *after* what we call the last breath. Even in that last of last moments almightiness of grace can yet do, what we know not. Only when dying, which is not at once, is ended, not merely to our eye and ear, but also to the eye and ear of the Almighty, is the tree felled, the last fiber cut, and the state and condition which shall be eternal enters in.

And as it is then, it remains. And then discloses itself the way that leads *upward* to him who is fallen asleep in Jesus, and opens itself the dark pathway to the depth, to him who then does not belong to Jesus.

On Jesus it depends.

The world may have reviled Jesus, cursed and in

the bitter death of the Cross have shaken Him off from itself, and that selfsame world may still continue to disparage Jesus and contest His dominion, yet every one shall once perceive, that his lot, too, for eternity hangs on Jesus.

Jesus is the only begotten of the Father, God's own, dear Son.

And therefore he who does not kiss that Son, goes in against God, and opposes Him even in that innermost and tenderest of the love wherewith the Father loves that only begotten Son.

He who belongs to that Son, him the Father bids welcome in the Father-house. For him who has no part in that Son, there is no part in the inheritance in the Kingdom of heaven.

It depends on Jesus.

Not by manner of speech, as though in the valley of death Jesus standing at the fork of the road, would give, as it might please Him, this one free passage, and turn the other back.

It depends, whether at that moment it is evident, that you belong with Jesus, have a part in Jesus, are of Jesus, and are incorporated in Him.

And this is what Scripture calls: Fallen asleep *in Jesus* (1 Thess. 4, 14, Rev. Version).

In Jesus.

Do not confuse the deep sense of this mystical expression.

Here you must not think of Jesus' *person*. Here is mention of His mystical *body*. He who as member

has been incorporated in the body of Jesus, is *in Jesus*.

But this body is not the body of flesh and blood, which in His human nature He took from Mary. That material body is now glorified, and like unto that glorified body the material body of the blessed shall once be. Jesus a glorified body, and you a glorified body.

No, here is mention of the *mystical* body of the Lord. Even as we still speak metaphorically of the “body” of the State, of the “body” of people, of the “body” of an association or institution. Body in Latin is *corpus*, from which comes our word *corporation*, and in its board of directors such a corporation has a *head*, and under this board of directors the corporation has *members*.

So says Scripture, with Jesus also belongs a *body*, and that body is the *Church*.

Insofar therefore there is nothing mystical in it. As there are all sorts of associations of people in the world, and every one knows a “body,” with a “head” and with “members,” so it is also here. There is one communion of all re-born sinners, and that communion also forms *one body*, and that body also has a *head* in Christ, and of that body all the re-born are *members*.

No, the mystical of this Body is, that Scripture says: Christ is “the head of the Church, which is his body, and the fullness (fulfilment) of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1, 23).

That “fulfilment” is called in Scripture: *the pleroma*. So the pleroma of the sun is the whole sphere in which his beams shine forth. The light is not merely the flame, but also the whole sphere of radiancy which the flame creates around itself, everything that makes the flame visible, the fullness of its brightness.

And so it is here. Jesus also is not confined and limited to His *person*, but there shines out from Him a sphere of love, light and life. That outshining is not merely a brightness, but an outshining that quickens life, that makes life to unfold, that causes life to develop itself, life with its blossom and fruit. And this outshining of Jesus, this life-quickening, animating, clarifying outshining of Jesus in people, is not apart from Him, but is Himself. As one can also say, that the sun is in his room, that the sun is in the flower, that by closing of blinds the sun is shut out, so is Jesus Himself in the church, in our heart, in our good works, and every one, that closes the windows of his soul against Jesus, banishes Jesus.

And all this together, wherein Jesus penetrates, shines into and shines out from and cherishingly operates, all this together is the sphere that belongs with Jesus: this is His body; and he who belongs to this, is of Jesus, incorporated in Jesus, he belongs with Him, he is His, he is in Jesus; and he who so dies, *is fallen asleep in Jesus*.

So the difference becomes evident.

In the world a corporation forms itself, a body of members, because they join themselves together, and found an association, and make a statute, and appoint an administration at the head. But all this is action of their will. It does not flow forth from their life. They can dissolve such a corporation again, or cease to be member of it, because there is no mysticism of life in it.

With the body of Jesus this is altogether different.

Into that body of Jesus you do not come by an act of your own will, neither by joining it, but by being born in it. You become no member of it by joining, but by that Jesus Himself incorporates you, and incorporates you with your hidden being, with the kernel of your heart, with your inner existence of soul, by causing you spiritually to root therein.

You do not join, but Jesus takes you up therein, as with the outshining of His life, with the cherishing of His love, with the brightness of His light He enters into you, even as the sun enters into the ground, into the plant, into its blossom and fruit.

This is *mystical*, because you can not trace it in its origin and operation; because although it takes place in you, at first you even have no knowledge of it. Even as you are conceived and born, and so become member of your father's family, without having anything yourself to do with it, or observing anything of it, so by the Holy Ghost you are begotten and born in this family of Jesus, and this family is His body, and there you are incorporated and made member of, only later on to become aware of it.

Then later on your act of will comes into play, to confess and to show yourself to be member also in the visible church. But this is merely result, and in that visible church there is many a member which is no member of the family above, neither is in the body of Jesus.

That body of Jesus lies back, lies underneath the church, which you see. That mystical body of Jesus is the background and the underground of it. But you as child of God are in it, spiritually, really, with the root of your existence. And as little as the sun is ever out-

side of his outshining, just so little is Jesus ever thinkable without that body of all His own, for that body is His *pleroma*, i.e., the fullness (fulfilment) of him that filleth all in all.

AND on this it depends in dying.

Here on earth that body of Jesus is still entangled with the body of the world. The one has not yet been extricated and removed from the other.

But this it comes to in dying. Death separates those two. In the act of falling asleep, everything that belongs to the body of Jesus, goes out pure and entire from the body of this world.

Thus it can not be otherwise. He who at his falling asleep is *in Jesus*, remains with Him eternally. But he also who, when he falls asleep, is *outside* of Jesus, can have no part with Him.

The phrase, the confession, the pious word in dying is undoubtedly significant. But you can not depend on it. It might be semblance. And then it amounts to nothing. Only being *in Jesus* is what decides.

Good works, alms, devotions that lie back of dying, *can* be marks of incorporation, but they can also be *semblance*. Though it were, that you had given all your goods to the poor, and had not love, you were *nothing*. Thus all this is significant only when it is result of Jesus' work in our heart. But what decides, is and remains solely the fact that you belong to Jesus, not by calculation, but in reality itself, and hence the being *in Jesus*, the inbeing in His spiritual body.

This is so with the infant, that dies in the cradle,

and with a Methuselah who brought more than nine centuries to a close.

If you have perceived, observed, that he whom you lost by death, was *in Jesus*, then you also know that your dead is fallen asleep *in Jesus*.

And as regards what God still left you to possess, and as regards your own soul, at the approach of death it always comes down again to this one thing: to flee and to avoid everything that might rob you of, or that might even becloud, the certainty that you are *in Jesus*. And then also, every morning and every evening to pursue and to reach after that blessed perception of soul, that you are *in Jesus*, to deepen and at the same time to clarify it to yourself, and to do this so zealously, that, were the Lord to call you this very day, your falling asleep also would be a thankful and jubilant falling asleep *in your Savior*.

II

"To Be with Christ, Which Is Far Better"

MYSTICISM is precious, but beware lest in conversation, in writing, or in case you are a minister of the Word, in preaching, you abuse its tense cries of soul as vain talk.

Hollow sound is so deadly a menace to the depth and the seriousness of our inner life. Not to externalize yourself and not to become a "tinkling cymbal," you should really never permit the cries of the soul of mysticism to flow from your pen or pass your lips, except as they have beforehand passed through your own soul, and in that passing through your soul, you have impressed the mark of your own soul upon them.

A preacher who has deeply felt the meaning of a single pious phrase, clearly thought it out, tenderly and in detail expresses it, enriches and refreshes you, while he who with a loud voice pours into your ears one pious utterance after another, like so many trumpet blasts, wearies you and deadens your religious receptivity.

This is especially true, when in larger or smaller groups we stand together at the entrance of the valley of the shadow of death, whether we do this to gaze after a loved departed one who disappeared therein, or to prepare one another for the hour, when our own way shall lead through the same.

Then our ordinary speech fails us, because for what is experienced in that somber valley, we have no proper words. So we use general phrases, in which the

feelings aroused by the dying and mourning interpret themselves. And it is equally natural, that God's dear children prefer to borrow these expressions from Holy Scripture.

Do not pass this over lightly. Not in high sounding phrases nor in fullness of detail, but in the word that has been deeply studied, is warmly felt, and has intimately been experienced does there throb at such a time real sympathy.

Where everything coöperates to strain our nerves, in the calm loosening of the ties that wind themselves around us, lies the inner strengthening of our soul.

So wrote the man of Tarsus to the church at Philippi, that he had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; because that was by far the best (Phil. 1, 23).

Does this selfsame deep expression apply to our own existence of soul? Would it therefore be honest and sincerely meant, if every one of us were to utter these lofty words as his own? And if God were to keep us to our word, and at that very moment were to strike us with deadly disease, would there not rather be terror in our soul, than thanks for hearing of prayer?

He who first wrung this word from his soul, was no ordinary believer, but a man extraordinarily endowed with grace. He enjoyed inspirations of the Holy Spirit as no one of us. Moreover, he was a oneling. He had neither wife nor children. And what speaks stronger still, he suffered under bitter persecution, and was a prisoner at Rome, menaced with sentence of death.

Add to this, that on the way to Damascus he him-

self had seen the Christ, that the soul-enchancing glory of that personal meeting had left behind in his soul a homesickness which nothing could pacify, and you readily understand, how such a man, who had nothing more to look forward to in this world and to whom the battle of life was a continual dying, without any exaggeration could testify, that he looked longingly forward to the end, and that endlessly to enjoy, what for one moment on the way to Damascus he had enjoyed, was for him so very far better.

But for this reason, that selfsame word in your lips can only be truth in those special moments, when in highly critical circumstances, with your whole soul you enter into it. And offhand to repeat it, while altogether other thoughts hold your attention, brings you no further, but puts you back, and accustoms you to hollow phrases, not experienced by yourself.

You then repeat after Paul, but do not speak for yourself, and what you say after the prisoner of Rome, is no truth in your own soul.

“To be with Christ” has here with Paul mystical significance. He knew very well, that after death his spirit alone, separated from the body, would enter upon constant fellowship with Christ. So he adds to this, that he has a desire to be *dissolved*, i.e., to be loosed from his visible appearance.

When the apostle John writes: “We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,” it does not refer to what takes place immediately after dying, but to what awaits God’s children after the resurrection.

Paul himself also testifies: "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more after the flesh" (2 Cor. 5, 16). His strong expectation of being with Christ, did not direct itself therefore to bodily sight, but to fellowship of soul, not to a gazing upon His gloriousness, but to an enjoyment of spiritual outpourings.

Therefore he does not say: "to be with Jesus," but "to be with Christ," because between these two names there is always this distinguishing difference, that thinking of *Jesus*, in our representation we bring His human appearance before us, while speaking of *Christ*, we uncover the eye of the soul to the Central Figure of our spiritual good.

It is true, that St. Paul later on cherished the quiet expectation of living to see the day of Jesus' return, and of entering, without dying, through wondrous change, into glory; but here he does not speak of this.

When he wrote, that "to be with Christ is by far the best," he thought of dissolution and of dying, so as separated soul spiritually to approach to the full fellowship of his Savior.

DOES this spiritual fellowship await us only after death?
Surely not.

Jesus Himself said: "I and the Father will come and make our abode with you" (St. John 14, 23), and in Revelation 3, 20 we have the promise that to the redeemed soul, seeking Him, Jesus comes already here on earth, to sup with him.

Thus what takes place with respect to this before

dying, and after dying is not essentially different. With His "grace, majesty and Spirit" Christ is omnipresent, and thus also in this life near unto us.

But yet there is considerable difference in degree of fellowship.

Even the "most saintly" of God's children, as our Catechism puts it, enjoy such rich fellowship with Christ only by moments. And then comes the stormy life again with its diversion, and its superficiality, and its externality, and its distraction, in which the soul wanders about at miles' distance from Christ.

And this ceases after death. Then the world has no more hold on us. Life to us has gone into death. And what here was enjoyed fully and deeply only at a single time, is then enjoyed uninterruptedly and forever.

And what is more, while here the "body of sin" in the present and by remembrance of the past, ever yet runs up a wall of separation between us and Christ, that wall of separation then falls away, and thereby the fellowship with Christ becomes far more intimate than it could ever be on earth.

To be without sin, and without remembrance of former sins, will be so Divinely rich to the redeemed soul.

WHERE the almighty Father of spirits, after death, will gather together His redeemed elect we do not know, and we can form no representation of it. We do not know one another otherwise than in the body, and thus bound to an observable spot. But spirits are free. They who

die in Christ shall be as the angels in heaven, and with them our whole calculation according to measurable distances falls away. To spiritual sight distance can make no difference.

But the separated soul remains therewith not only in the enjoyment of her spiritual senses, but only then with the eye of the soul shall see aright, and with the ear of the soul shall hear most acutely. Her sphere of life shall enchantingly be extended. In that sphere of her higher life Christ shall be the spiritual Center, and all God's angelic host, with the host of His redeemed and blessed, the scintillating fullness of that life.

To what development, and richer perfection, in such a sphere of life, the redeemed soul shall prove susceptible, is the secret of heaven. But it is certain, that God the Lord shall only then reveal what hidden germs of spiritual power and spiritual riches He had stored in the heart of His human child. Flowers shall then unfold, the beauty of which we have never surmised, precious stones shall sparkle, whose brilliance would here have blinded us.

And all this shall be enjoyed as direct, ever continuous outbeaming of Christ in the focus of the soul, and a love, as here the soul could not have borne, shall set the heart aglow for that Christ.

AND do you ask reverently, where then God is, and whether the tenderest worship of our soul already here, and especially on the other side of the grave must not go out to the Eternal Being, as the Psalmist sang (17, 15): "I shall delight myself with Thy Likeness

when I awake," observe then once more, that St. Paul speaks of being with *Christ*, and not of being with Jesus.

This escaped the attention of many, and so they came to a Jesus-veneration, which in fact led away from the Eternal Being, and especially women were misled thereby.

But when you hold fast to that "*to be with Christ*," is not that to possess your God in Christ Himself? Is not He Himself God to be praised above all, forever? And when the redeemed soul seeks the Eternal Being, not in the Hiddenness of His Being, but in His Revelation, can she then find God, that Eternal Being, otherwise and more richly revealed than in the Son of His love? Has not he, who has Christ, the Father in Him, and is it not in that same Christ that all approach of God the Holy Ghost comes to us?

Outside of Christ it is all darkness and hiddenness, but in Christ, if we may so express ourselves, the crystal-line window is opened, through which the liberated soul gazes into the depth of the Divine Being.

Philip could still say: "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us," and he had to be answered: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father" (John 14, 8).

But the redeemed soul asks so no longer. She is with Christ and in and through Christ sees her God.

III

"The Mortal Swallowed Up of Life"

ACCORDING to what at dying you see before your eyes, you can not say otherwise, than that it is Death, that terrible enemy of God and man, who finally succeeds in swallowing up a life so precious to you.

It was not his first attempt. At least it is exceptional, when he who dies has not been stricken by sickness before, and there was fear of Death around his bed.

But at those earlier assaults of Death it was still averted. After the evening in which weeping made our heart weak, there had been joy in the morning. Having reached the crisis, the disease gave way. And, O, what unspeakable wealth for the heart was this getting back of our beloved sick.

But now it went otherwise.

Nothing helped, nothing availed, and with the passing out of that last faint breath, it seemed as though cruel death laughed at you, with all your unheard prayers and your futile endeavors, and scornfully whispered in your ear: "In spite of all I *won* the day, this time the morning in which you were to rejoice, did *not* come."

And there you stood, heartbroken, at the deathbed-side. And there lay your dead, soul-less, life-less. Yea, truly indeed, as it seemed, *swallowed up* of Death. Swallowed up, so hard a word. As we say of a beast of prey, that it *devours*. Everything at once gone. The look

of the eye, the sweet word of the lips, the warm hand-grasp, the speaking of the face.

Everything at once gone. Cold, withered, somber. Life swallowed up of Death.

He who has no other eye, sees it in this way. He who knows nothing but the world, can not see it otherwise.

And let us acknowledge it, as it is, in the first hard moment, as a shock that goes through the heart, even the child of God does not see it otherwise.

Oh, it is such somber gazing into the hollowness and into the darkness of the valley of the shadow of Death, when we see one on whom our heart hung enter into that dreadful valley.

Death who carries off his prey before our eyes, and we who grieved and helpless must see him do it.

So is the reality. The bitter reality in the visible. And it is cowardly to deceive yourself, when you hide that hard reality underneath funeral wreaths and display of flowers, or deem to minister comfort by generalities about a providential love of God.

There is no seriousness in this, it is lack of courage, when you take such a blind, to hide the hardness of death from yourself and from others.

You have prayed, and God has not heard. Your prayer notwithstanding, Death has overcome. Is then God not Almighty? Where then is that providential love, that He allowed Death to have his way, more still, that He *sent* Death to you, and *abandoned* your loved one to him?

No, confess, that Death is because of sin. Be pricked in your conscience. And acknowledge that God's dreadful anger operated in that dying. So in the presence of your dead at least you can tremble before God's *holiness*. But to prate of providential love, when God allows cruel Death to rob you of the dearest you had on earth, when you see the precious life fade before your eyes, perish and swallowed up, this is lying against your soul.

In the uprightness of your soul you can not do this.

This is playing with words on the brink of the grave.

BUT now comes God's Word. And without detracting anything from that hard reality, that Word turns the whole matter around for you.

Altogether around.

Before your bodily eye it is so and not otherwise. But you also have an eye in your soul. An eye that is stone-blind, and catches no single beam of light, and *sees* nothing, until God converts you, and *makes* you spiritually seeing.

And then discloses itself before these eyes in your soul also a reality. But a reality *that is the direct opposite*, and which shows, not how Death swallows up life, but how in dying itself *the mortal is swallowed up of life* (2 Cor. 2, 4).

How is this possible? There is no one who can solve it. But it is possible and *in Jesus* it is so. In that Wondrous One Who Himself took hold of Death and compelled Death to let Him go through to glory, and held the way open behind Him, that undisturbed and

unhindered by Death all His own should be permitted to follow after Him into glory.

Life, real life, is too mighty, than that it can remain bound in this earthly tabernacle. Here it can not spread its wings. And therefore in the end life must shake off this earthly, this mortal from itself, to go on to its higher reality. It must *break itself loose* from this mortal body. And that breaking loose is dreadful to behold. But then also life comes where it is destined to be. Then it unfolds itself in full majesty. And for this purpose life first had to swallow up the mortal.

BEFORE your eye, that from your soul gazes into eternity, the dead body does not lie as a token that Death has obtained a victory, but as *a trophy of life*.

It is the broken shell, and the very fact that the shell is broken, shows that life has now become free and breathes in higher atmosphere.

The brokenness of the body, otherwise so hard and cruel, is now token of liberation, visible, tangible proof that life has wrenched loose the mortal tie.

And that breaking itself loose from the mortal, now to unfold itself in glory, your dead himself could not do, and *you* can not do that, when once you yourself die; but that did, that doeth the Prince of Life, that does your Jesus, when there is life in you, and when in Him, in His life you are incorporated.

It is not your dead who *here* dies, and Jesus far distant, and your dead who now *goes to* Jesus. No, He was present. He did it. And when Death laughed you to scorn, as though he had conquered, soul-enchant-

ingly your Savior smiled upon you, and showed you the crown, the palm-branch of victory.

HE who stands outside of this, is in a grievous predicament. He who does *not* believe, when he dies, perishes. Death holds him fast. And he who so sees his dead die, can only speak of comfort and of hope, with the self-deception of funeral-wreaths and hollow phrases. This makes the recklessness so terrible on the part of those who close their ears to the voice of the call of Jesus, and even seek with others to break down the beginnings of faith in Jesus.

Their waking in eternity shall be mortally distressing!

God's children do not understand indeed by far in ordinary times, what grace has been accorded them, that they are enabled *to believe*, and, when they see their dear ones die, that they may know, that their beloved were incorporated in Jesus.

This does not indeed take away anxiety from illness, and hardness from dying, and the chill from the grave. The loss and forsakenness follow, and the wound in the heart *must* bleed.

But alongside and above that life in the visible with its woe and deep sorrows stands also that other reality, which is yet more certain, than what here makes you weep bitter tears, and from *that* reality sacred joy, heavenly peace pour out toward you. A perception that can be so vivid, that in you it becomes as it was in the soul of St. Paul, when he wrote: I would rather be absent from the body, and dwell with the Lord.

AND do not say, that there cleaves morbidity to such language of faith, because he who is disposed like this, becomes unfit for his task here below.

This is truly the case, when in your God and in your Jesus you worship merely holy Beings, Who are there to help you, to save you, and to bring you unto eternal life; when you want to be the central figure, and would have God's holy counsel do its reckoning according unto you.

But such is *not* the case, when with your dead and with those who are still spared you, you know that, both in life and death, here and in glory, you exist alone for God's sake and for the sake of His Holy Name.

He our Father and we His children; He the Lord, and we His menservants and His maidservants.

For then alone is life here good, and also for so long imperative duty, as here we work *His work*, and are permitted to labor at the task *He gave us*.

Then we are born to serve Him, and re-born for no other purpose than in the Son of His love to glorify Him.

Then He gives us faith, not to save us, but that in our blessedness He might make His own Name great.

Then is our life the Lord's, whether we still remain here, or whether we enter eternity.

And then our dying, and that of our loved ones never comes otherwise than at *that* moment, and never otherwise than amid those circumstances, which He our God deemed necessary for the consummation of His counsel, and for the honor and praise of His Name.

And then freely confess, that so there is weeping of the evening and rejoicing of the morning in the same heart.

So intermingled is the inner life of every one who together with those that are his, *wills to exist alone for his God.*

A weeping by reason of the sharp pain which the wounded heart feels, and yet from that same heart a note of rejoicing and of praise going upward for what God has prepared for his dead, who went from him, and for what for this life is left him of comfort, of love and of holy calling.

IV

"Clothed Upon"

IN a twofold figure of speech the apostle portrays what in dying happens with us in our body.

In 1 Cor. 15 the metaphor of the grain of wheat, that falls into the open furrow; by the working of the ground, of penetrating moisture and of inshining warmth, swells, bursts and goes to nought, but in that going to nought causes a germ, and presently from that germ a blade to unfold. So, says the apostle, it happens with us. Our mortal remains descend into the earth, under the ground it is decomposed, presently its place is no more found. But there is also something here that remains, and which presently unfolds itself in richness of forms. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

This is the first figure of speech. But when he wrote again to the church at Corinth, he added a second one, not of a grain of wheat but of the earthly tabernacle.

We know, so he wrote, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. 5, 1).

The first image is taken from the sphere of common grace, the second from special Revelation.

When God commanded Moses to build for Israel a "tent for the congregation," He showed him "an house not made with hands, that is eternal in the heavens."

“See to it,” so reads the word of the Lord in Ex. 25, 40, “see to it, that thou make them after the pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.” A fact so important, that in the New Testament, we are twice reminded of it, first in Acts 7, 44 and afterward in Hebr. 8, 5.

Thus there was here a mystical connection between the “tabernacle” in the wilderness and “the habitation of God” in heaven. And when presently the tabernacle unfolds itself into the glorious temple of Solomon, the imperfect is gone to nought, and the perfect has developed itself from it. But in such a way, that both times in tabernacle and in temple the original thought of God, which had been shown to Moses, reflects itself.

This now the apostle, by the choice of his second image, transfers to our body.

The glory of the work of Redemption is, that God Himself makes habitation in the heart of those that are sanctified, and that *in us* as in His temple the Holy Ghost prays and ministers comfort. So God’s child himself is become an habitation of God, his body a temple of the Lord.

And in connection with this applying to himself the glorious image of tabernacle and temple, he declares that the mortal body, in which we walk about, is the tabernacle in the wilderness, and that that tabernacle must go under, to make place for the glorious temple, for the house not made with hands, our perfected, our consummated, our glorified body in heaven.

Thus in two figures of speech, one from the general and the other from the special Revelation, the same rich thought: The body, in which we now walk about goes to nought, but will once be replaced by a far more

glorious body, and between these two, after Divine ordinance, there is an hidden, a mystical coherence.

The ear proceeds from the grain of wheat, the temple from the tabernacle.

YET with this there is not enough said.

For the question can not be suppressed, whether this transition, this change of thought, this unfolding of the corruptible into the incorruptible, takes place at once, in one moment of time. Or whether between the going down and the rising again there is a lapse of time.

In the two chosen images this was so.

When the grain of wheat is confided to the earth, the blade and ear are not matured at once, but months go by. And when Solomon built the temple the tabernacle had already for years been robbed of its first glory.

So there lapses a time appointed of God between the moment that in death we loosen our mortal body and shake it off from us, and that other moment in which Christ, having appeared with His holy angels, shall make our mortal body like unto His own glorified body, by that wondrous, Divine power, whereby He subjects all things unto Himself.

Yet this lapse of time is not equally long for all.

The longest for the patriarchs of before the Flood, the shortest for those who will last be born on earth.

And just before Jesus' return there will be redeemed of Christ on earth, whose dying will coincide with their resurrection. Or, more correctly, they will

not die, but their mortal body shall at once be changed into their glorified body.

Twice the apostle extols the happiness of these last. First in 1 Cor. 15. Then in 1 Thess. 4.

And this is what in 2 Cor. 5, 2, he calls: Not to be *unclothed*, but *clothed upon*.

At the same moment letting the earthly garment slip from us, and putting on our glorified body.

THIS “clothing,” “unclothing” and “to be clothed upon” is a new image introduced by the apostle in the image of the tabernacle. This was the more easily done, as the tabernacle consisted of coverings and curtains. The tent of the Bedouin is still his second garment, which, wherever he goes, he carries with him.

In clearness, therefore, it falls short of nothing. On earth we are *clothed* with our mortal body. When we lay this earthly body aside we become *unclothed*. And we become *clothed upon*, when we belong to those few, who in one moment of time exchange the mortal for the glorious body.

The many, on the other hand, with whom between their dying and their resurrection a shorter or longer time elapses, are during that time “unclothed,” or as the apostle also calls it “naked.”

By far the lot of most.

And the thought of this has to the apostle something grievous. He makes no secret of it, that “in this tabernacle we groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon.” The same thought, which in verse 2 he expressed like this: “For

in this we groan, earnestly desiring *to be clothed upon* with our house which is from heaven."

Not, that therefore any doubt rises in the heart.

Even though we shall not at once be "clothed upon," yet we *know*, that we *have* a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Only, though this is so, we can not therefore immediately after dying take possession of the same.

This bides till Jesus' return, and until then the child of God that dies lacks his connection with the visible.

SPIRITUALLY this brings no less enjoyment with it. Liberated from this body of sin and of death, the redeemed soul has spiritual organs, by which she immediately discovers and observes the spiritual world.

There is an outside and an inside of life. And though, so long as the resurrection tarries, all those who died in Jesus are excluded from that outside of life, as regards what is visible and perceptible, the redeemed and liberated ones have fellowship with the deep inside of life. Holy, solemnly and stately the eye of the soul opens to that spiritual world, and therein can do no otherwise than rejoice. For she has no more sin and no more temptation. She perceives nothing around her save what is pure and holy and heavenly. And in the center of that pure, holy world the Lamb, that was slain, and in Him the Eternal Being, blessed forever. He who has died in Jesus, immediately after waking in the world of invisible things, delights himself in the Image of God.

Here we have need of sensual organs for this. There no longer. Free from the body of sin, by her own instrumentation the redeemed soul lives the life in that holy world.

Yet this does not bring our creation-ordinance to nought.

According to that creation-ordinance we as human beings are destined, to inlive not merely in the invisible, but also in the visible world. He also who died in Jesus, remains *man*.

And for all that are called *man* it is a lack, when we can not reveal ourselves in the visible.

Hence the apostle does not say: “If I may but enjoy Jesus spiritually, why should I be concerned about the visible.”

No, he also remains calling for the glorious body.

Perfect shall the glory be, only when the naked soul shall be clothed upon.

AND this is the glory of our hope, that we *know*, that this last grace also is assured to God’s saints. And the church of Christ in all ages has confessed this hope in her significant article: “I believe in the resurrection of the flesh.”

How this shall be, no one of us can say. Only we know, that the beginning of this our earthly tabernacle consisted of one small, unobservable germ. This, as embryologists teach, was hidden in one, very small cell. And that, by the taking up of dust of this earth, from this invisible germ our whole body was constructed.

This dust so taken at our dying falls away again.

But this germ remains. This is indestructible. And therein wondrously hide *all* the data for what makes our body a *personal* body to us.

When once Christ brings this provisionally latent germ in touch with the dust of the new world, then from this of itself the new body is built up, that is suited to glory.

It shall then be with us, as with brushwood, which, cut down at the ground, withers. But cherished by the sun in spring, sends out new roots. Holy Scripture calls it "the seed in which after the withering the substance still remains" (Is. 6, 13). Or also "the new root out of the dry ground" (Is. 53, 2).

And then we shall be "clothed upon," no longer to serve merely spiritually, but *after soul and body both*, eternally in glory to serve, and to praise Him, Who, Himself Love, alone is worthy of all our love.

“Clothed in White Raiment”

HOMESICKNESS after heaven does not spring in every heart from the same urge.

There are those who long after heaven, because they have become too old for this world. The world no longer interests them, and they no longer interest the world. If they were still in the full strength of life, which formerly was their glory, they would have no thought of death. But now that their strength is broken, and the stem bruised, the thought comes to them with increasing clearness, that in heaven things will be better than here.

Another is not yet old, but many things went against him. By bitter losses and grievous sorrow wound upon wound was inflicted in his heart, and those wounds continue to bleed. Time does not heal them. Everything on earth became so empty to him. All his loved ones have preceded him to heaven. With respect to them he feels already now, in thought, more at home above, than here below.

With a few, not many, this homesickness after heaven has a nobler impulse. They love Jesus. Not merely love as every Christian loves Him, Who went into death for us, but to such a degree, that they “rejoice in Him, though not seeing Him, with an unspeakable joy.” Not sentimentally, but in a holy and tender way. Tender, because in Jesus they have access to the Father. And because, as the hart thirsts after the

water brooks, so does their soul thirst after the living God. These are the souls, such as, alas, are rarely found, who are filled with an overflowing love for the Eternal Being.

So we could go on. With some the homesickness after the country above is indeed a drawing toward the Fatherland, that Father-house where they would be at home. Others burn with desire after a more glorious estate, than was their portion here. There are those, who have so bitterly wept on earth, and still weep, by reason of the endless sorrow that overwhelmed them; children of misfortune as the world calls them; who now long for the moment when the last tear shall be wiped from their eye.

Oh, do not let us deceive ourselves and the church of God. They who cherish real homesickness after heaven, and with the apostle have a desire to depart to-day rather than to-morrow, are thinly sown, even among the faithful; and even among those, who really know this homesickness, the urge which drives them, is still so seldom of the "finest gold."

We do not deny, that in every motive which we have mentioned, there is *something* that has the right to be heard. Almost every one of them is justified in Scripture. But yet, if it will be well with the soul, thirsting after the living God must become the strongest urge, and what is like unto this: the fervent, ardent longing of soul, at last to break with sin forever, and *altogether to die unto sin*.

St. Paul calls this: To be delivered from the body of this death. Christ Himself describes this to the church in Sardis as a being "*clothed with white raiment*" (Rev. 3, 5).

But to know this longing of soul, like a strong, irresistible dynamic, hatred of Satan, hatred of sin, must inwardly rage and war in the heart.

OUR death is no payment for sin; but *a dying unto sin*.

Here God's child remains until his death a victim of sin.

A confusing thought to our thinking and confessing, and a painful reality to our conscience.

O, it sounds so enchantingly glorious when it says: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6, 2). Or likewise: "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin (i.e., the essence of sin) might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6, 6). Or finally: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; and he can no more sin, because the seed of God remaineth in him" (1 John 3, 9).

But with all this sin continues to dwell in us. Every time again we feel the inclination to sin arise in us. And every evening anew we have to confess our sins before our God.

There have been people, even preachers, who have said: "I have overcome. For more than ten years I have done no more sin. One can be really holy already here on earth." But bitter was the disillusionment in most cases. How miserably was more than one of those who said so, presently surprised by gross sin!

Read and reread how even an apostle like Paul bemoaned his own condition of soul: "I delight in the

law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members, which brings me into captivity to the law of sin." And that same John, who, overcoming so gloriously wrote, that whosoever is born of God *can* no more sin, did not he also write: "If we say, that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us?"

Alas, we have no need of a witness, we ourselves know it well. Also among God's children sin remains a power, before which so frequently they succumb. True, it is no more the old *dominion* of sin. In the strict sense they no more *serve* sin. They have sorrow of soul on account of their sin. It is to them a shameful stain upon their garment.

Also they laugh Satan in the face, as often as they draw themselves into the center of their faith, and feel themselves hidden in Christ. However it may storm round about them, and storm in their life, and storm in their heart, in the end they lie anchored to their grace-given assurance of faith.

But in actual life, in their daily existence of soul, in their deliberations and inclinations and deeds and words, they continue to stumble; and what Paul exclaimed: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death," with them also comes at times so touchingly deep from the heart.

And when this frame of mind continues in them, when that ardent desire arises in them not merely now and then, at times, but becomes a continuous, abiding, over-dominating longing, a heartfelt homesickness and an ardent thirsting of soul in them,—then also dying comes to stand before them in another form, and the

sense becomes alive in them, that that dying alone can become the means to them, *of dying unto sin*.

BUT before it comes so far, with most people there must, O, so much be changed in their heart.

Listen to the conversations. A plan is proposed. It meets with approval. O, yes, that plan might do. If it might be permissible, it would be splendid. But no, I will not consent to it. I will not do it. I will have no part in it. Because it is not *lawful*.

Thus really the will to do is there. One feels strongly inclined towards it. There is a vague desire that the commandment, which forbids it, might not exist. One would like to be free, and be permitted to sin. But he refrains from fear. He does not do it because it is not allowed. One would do it, but he will not consciously and with premeditation go against God.

And so he kept himself standing. One did not succumb in the temptation. One overcame. But yet, the inward inclination was there, and hatred of sin, because it is sin, was not there yet.

And this is the dreadfulness, the poignancy of it. That fascination, which much that is sinful, still exerts upon our heart.

More still.

We overcame . . . yet . . . in most cases only when the opinion of the brethren carried us. When there was mention of a sin, which among the brethren in general was disapproved. When it concerned a wrong, that might be discovered. When there was mention of some-

thing sensual, something worldly, of something noticeable.

But how is it, when no one would notice it, *save God alone*? When it concerns a sin of our pride, of our self-conceit, of our ambition, of our lust of power. In brief, a sin, which is generally not counted among the "immoral," though our soul well knows, that Satan never sins otherwise than through just such sins as these, and yet is cast off most dreadfully by God.

We think so often, that we leave something undone *for God's sake*, while in fact *we leave it undone for people's sake*.

But even then, when you do not do a thing for God's sake, it is often rather leaving a thing undone because it is so terrible to fall into the hands of the living God, than because you love God, and carry in yourself something of that hatred wherewith God Himself hates sin.

And yet, he who would crave for and long after *dying to sin*, and after being clothed in the white raiment, must in his heart stand *opposed to sin itself*. He must shun sin as a pestilence, that menaces him with death, as a poisonous serpent that winds itself around his soul, as an evil power that aims to overcome him.

In sin he must see his mortal enemy, the roaring lion that goes about to devour him.

As one approaches a person sick with a contagious disease, with fear in the heart, of being oneself infected, so he must be aware of the touch of the sin of the world on his soul.

Never again: "I am inclined toward it, but it is forbidden." But always: "O God, sin is approaching again, save, redeem, protect thy servant."

And when in spite of this sin always knocks again at the door of our heart, and we always feel: "So it shall go until our death," yes, then, at length there rises in our heart that exalted, that holy longing of soul to die, not merely because it shall be the entrance upon everlasting life, but even better still, because then forever, down to the deepest part of our life, *we shall die unto sin.*

VI

"They Are as the Angels"

BETWEEN the meditations, to which dying frequently invites, and the leading thought which Holy Scripture associates with the grave, there is this striking difference, that with us the tender question of meeting again forces itself into the foreground, and that Scripture always mentions first the "being with Jesus" and the "delighting oneself in the image of God."

Not that thereby Scripture excludes the possibility of meeting again and of recognition. But nowhere in Scripture does that meeting-again appear in the foreground as the real ground of comfort. There is no direct mention of it in the Old Testament, and nowhere is it emphasized in the Scripture of the New Covenant.

The Old Covenant alludes to a "being gathered to the fathers," but this was more a national- or tribal-idea, than a *personal* expectation. Only one might say, that in the parable of the "rich man and Lazarus" the rich, after his death, at once recognizes both Abraham and poor Lazarus. Yet let it be observed, that the knowing of Abraham here is no recognition, and that with the recognition of Lazarus there is mention rather of an aggravation of the rich man's trouble than of alleviation. The rich man is not in heaven, but in hell. And where we speak of meeting again and recognition, we mean least of all a recognition of the godless, but a meeting again of those, who with us were incorporated in Christ.

The only certainty Scripture offers us with regard to meeting again, is that he who himself dies in the faith, is gathered to the "congregation of just men made perfect," and that naturally in that "congregation of just men made perfect" we shall also find those, whom here in the hope of eternal life we carried to the grave.

So all "meeting again" depends exclusively upon the tie of faith, which unites us with our dead in Christ. But always in this way; that in the congregation of just men made perfect, not those who went before, but Christ is ever the great center of attraction, and that all meeting again and living together again is made *secondary* to our relation to God in Christ.

IN this way, however, the "meeting again" is not commonly meant. What is thought regarding this is mostly a continuance in heaven of the relation of blood or of friendship, which here on earth bound us to our beloved dead.

And with respect to this Jesus asks: "Do ye not err, because ye know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God?" (Matt. 22, 29).

There was mention of a woman who had died, who had been married several times, and now the question arose: If the earthly tie of love is continued in the hereafter, whose wife shall she be?

And Jesus cuts off this idea altogether. Of *such* a meeting again and such living together again the Scriptures know nothing. And he who nevertheless thinks of it in this way, misses an eye for that wondrous power of God, whereby for the life hereafter He

called an ordinance into being, which is altogether distinct from life here on earth.

If on earth the marriage-tie is the strongest of all ties, so that in his chorus Vondel could truthfully sing: "Where in the world is truer faithfulness found than between man and wife? The tie that binds the heart of *mother* to the *child*, brought forth in pain and sorrow, fed at her breast with milk, long carried under her heart, unites the blood. But stronger still is the tie of the couple, that hand in hand, plight troth no more to separate," and then follows the praise of marriage in song.

But this very strongest of all ties operates only with respect to earthly economy. Not in behalf of heaven. Jesus states it clearly, that after the resurrection this tie does not return: "As touching the resurrection of the dead, when they have risen from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, *but are as the angels in heaven.*"

Is there among the angels of God no mutual acquaintance? Would angels, not knowing one another, thoughtlessly pass one another by? Surely not this. But this is certain, that their mutual relation is not borrowed from the love-tie of marriage, or from the tie between mother and child, or between brothers and sisters, but that their mutual tie and relation exclusively regulates itself *after the ministry which they fulfil in the hosts of God.*

They have no mutual family-life of their own, so that their religion, their service of God, *is added to* this mutual life. But this service of God, this fact that they

are "servants of the Most Highest," is *all* their life. For angels there is no other living together thinkable except in that service of the Lord.

When Jesus says, that, both after dying, and after the resurrection of the dead, the social life of believers shall not bear the character, which it had here and was bound to possess, but that it shall be a social life *as of God's holy angels*, one can not infer from this otherwise, than that earthly relationships fall away, and that the soul's close relation to Christ and in the service of God *alone* shall determine eternally also our living together.

He therefore who in thinking of his own dying fancies, that his blessedness shall consist in that he shall find back again his home-circle and group of friends, which here was once so great a joy to him, and that the former life, now altogether sanctified, shall be resumed and continued, by the positive teaching of Jesus, is not encouraged herein, but definitely disillusioned.

For so far as you had a tie in Christ with your dead, in so far does that tie continue eternally. When you yourself shall be as an angel of God in heaven, everything else falls away.

EVEN at the grave the creature may never rank himself above the Eternal. And where in tenderness our sentiment inclines, to be enticed to this, we must resist this play of emotion.

The attempt, when presently the grave is closed, to picture to ourselves a certain continued fellowship with our beloved dead, leads certainly away from the path of true godliness. This effort is beautiful, when

it is a living over again *of the past*. But it loses the track, when we think of our dead, as looking down upon us and perceiving all we do and all that befalls us. That for them who went from us memory remains active, may be accepted. Otherwise recognition would be unthinkable. But of what after their death takes place on earth, they carry *no* knowledge. "Though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not, thou, O Lord, art our Father" (Is. 63, 16).

Even the thought, that the looking down upon us on the part of our dead should hold us back from sin, can make no difference here. What is sinful we will shun, not for the sake of our dead, but *for the sake of the Lord our God*. "Against thee, said David, *against Thee only* have I sinned" and only what you do not do for God's sake, has moral weight.

Thus dying truly brings about temporary separation. Remembrance alone remains. But beyond that remembrance the departed know nothing of us. Neither do we know anything of those who went from us, save alone in so far as there is certainty of our relationship in Jesus, and of being associated in the service of our God.

But that we are workers together in the service of God, is not denied us until we meet again.

They above, and we here below, *remain* united in that service of the Kingdom of our God, even while already now they build a wall of the temple of God, which withdraws them from our eye and us from their eye.

NOT melancholy sentiment therefore, but that together we are in the service of the selfsame King, and together move about the selfsame God as center of all, is the tie that is never broken, continues through death and grave, and in the day of resurrection shall renew the glorious sense of solidarity.

Always on condition, that with this also we leave everything earthly out of count, and of the heavenly never cherish anything else than heavenly thoughts.

Already here on earth we do not always live in *the same* relation. First there is life together with parents, brothers and sisters. Then a life together with those who are congenial to us at school or in some particular branch of study. After that comes a life together in one's own family. And furthermore, a life together with those who engage with us in the same line of work or are bound to us by the tie of friendship. Our environment also changes, when we move from one place of residence to another. And without saying that with such changes the former ties die away altogether, yet we know very well, that the later relation frequently becomes altogether different from what it was before.

How small and insignificant, however, are the changes in life upon earth, compared with that *appalling change*, that takes place, when from the environment of our earthly calling we are transferred to our heavenly surrounding and heavenly service.

Now the dispositions of God as regards our earthly relationships are naturally adapted to the task, *which here we have to accomplish*. In like manner the dispositions of God as regards our heavenly relationships will be disposed to the service to which the same God will deign to call us in eternity. Something from which fol-

lows, that the grouping of persons with respect to a like service above can frequently be an entirely different one, from what it was here on earth. Persons forgotten here can there stand in the fore, he who here stood in the front rank, may there be assigned a subordinate position.

Always as *the angels of God*, and therefore as the angels of God never asking for anything else, than to be ready for the service of our Lord.

THEREBY upon the "seeing again" and the "recognition" such an altogether different, and a far holier light is thrown.

Then all egoism falls away. Then there is no mention of possessing for ourselves again, those who went from us, nor of setting up the earthly housekeeping with them again in the hereafter.

Then it will rather be, a reverently becoming aware of what place Jesus has prepared for them in the great house of the Father. What new calling is given them. To what other service they have been chosen. And what powers, formerly in hiding, have surprisingly unfolded in them for that holy service. And then delighting oneself therein, by reason of the wondrous counsel of God, which had so ordained it for them. And also in connection with that appointment of God, understand, O, so much of what in their nature, in their natural ability and in their lot in life we had never understood here on earth.

And yes, then once again a bond of love, but one of so entirely a different nature. Here it was, together

to build a house for ourselves, but there it shall be the joy and the privilege, together to be permitted to have part in the building of the temple of the glory of our God.

And therefore, even if in the hereafter we are not with our beloved dead called again to the *same* service, no complaint shall proceed from this nor any melancholy feeling of disappointment, because then on both sides we shall know no higher and no holier happiness, than ourselves to labor and to see one another labor in *that* place and at *that* task, which most glorifies our God.

VII

"In My Father's House Are Many Mansions"

FOR what is purely spiritual, we are without form of representation.

Everything that is visible, tangible and corporeal has in the vision-field of our imagination outlines and tints, but when you undertake to think of a *soul*, you stand confused. When you would represent an *angel* to yourself, you take the human form as a help and enrich it with wings. And when you ascend still higher and try to lift up your worshiping thought to the Eternal Being, you lose yourself in the formless Infinite.

And so it is, when with your thoughts you endeavor to place yourself in Heaven.

You have indeed read of a Throne of God, and of the Thrice Holy, the train of Whose garment covers the steps of the throne. But that is imagery, and no reality in plastic sense. And when you then hear of the ten times ten thousand angels that surround the throne, and of the altar of prayers that stands before that throne, and of the four and twenty Elders from God's people who kneel at that altar, there is design in the representation, and in and with it all you can think also of the Assembly of the just made perfect and of the "saints in white raiment," but in the end there is always again a cruel shock that draws everything away from before your eye. For it is and remains figurative language, and as, judging by these images, you would represent it to yourself, it is not.

Of course it is the height of all superficialities, when the doubter exclaims: Then your faith in a soul, a spirit, a God, a heaven is nothing but imagination. For a power, like the power of attraction, and the power of repulsion, and the power of growth and so much more can as little be seen or handled or represented, and yet you feel and see every moment that that multiplicity of powers truly exists in nature and operates.

And likewise, courage, will-power, enthusiasm, inspiration and so much more are phenomena in life, which also you never observe otherwise than by the effect, and yet that effect shows that these spiritual powers really exist.

The fact is, that we, as regards our representation are bound to the sensual and visible side of things, and therefore can neither think nor speak about the spiritual otherwise than in figurative language, in imagery, and in image-terminology borrowed from what we see and observe.

Now this would be very poor, if there were no inner and original connection between the spiritual fact and this figurative language. Or to say it still more clearly, if that spiritual world and the visible world stood disconnectedly side by side, and if the traits of similarity which we observe between the two, and with the help of which we form our figurative language, were purely *accidental*.

A conqueror is crowned with a wreath of laurels about the temples, yet every one feels, that inwardly this laurel-branch and the victory have nothing in common with each other.

When on the other hand we call upon God as our Father Who is in heaven, we remind ourselves that man

is created after God's Image, and that therefore the father-name among men is nothing but a weak expression for what the eternal Fatherhood in God is.

On the ground of the creation of man after God's Image we may say, that the figurative language for the spiritual world, borrowed from our human life, does not rest upon purely accidental similarity, but upon similarity in origin and substance. He who considers, moreover, how all nature, and the vegetable-world and the animal-world exhibit a certain undeniable relation with man, surmises naturally, that also in that world of nature there lies a reflection of the Eternal. And when we read, that Moses had to make the tabernacle after the pattern which God had shown him in the mount, we go yet further, and dare conjecture, that the works of man also reflect something of what is real above.

Does not St. Matthew tell us, that when Jesus spoke in parables, He brought out things that "had been hidden from the foundation of the world?"

And, what finally ends all, you believe that Jesus is in heaven, not merely as a spiritual being, but glistening in His glorified body, and does there not follow from this, that with Jesus also there must be certain relation and certain coherence between His glorified body and the spiritual world in which He dwells?

Otherwise that being in heaven of Jesus becomes purely magical, and almost absurd.

THIS now must stand in the foreground, when we overhear from Jesus' lips the glorious words, *that in the*

Father-house above there are many mansions, and that He went thither before us there to prepare a place for us (John 14, 2).

To this figurative language there must be a corresponding reality in heaven.

When of fallen angels it is said, that *they have left their own habitation* (Jude 6) it tells us that they had an habitation of their own, and that thus the angels that did not fall still possess that *habitation*.

Without thinking in connection with this of tabernacles, of tents or houses in a literal sense, so much is here implied that angels as well as the blessed have their own place, in which they dwell. Hence, there is in heaven not only one hovering sphere in which everything mingles itself, but in heaven there is also what we would call length and breadth, there are extensions, and in that extended domain there are distinctions and divisions, places for one which are not for the other, distinguished for angels and distinguished for the blessed.

And with respect to this Jesus says three things. *First*, that for the blessed there are many mansions. *Then*, that these mansions together form the one Father-house. And *thirdly*, that in one of these many mansions there is a separate place for every elect, which Jesus prepares for him.

Consider each of these three.

FIRST: *there are many mansions for the blessed.*

Thus the one heaven is not a distinctionless whole. Not one nebulous sphere in which everything dissolves

itself without distinction. But there are divisions, each with its boundaries, and by these bounded divisions there originates multiplicity. There is mansion alongside of mansion, and those mansions are not all alike, but have a peculiar something of their own, by which one distinguishes itself from the other.

They are not levels, or empty places, but *mansions*. Not like our houses, which must protect us against wind and rain and cold and heat, but yet mansions in which a life-milieu forms itself, and within which a social life, a coöperation, an enjoying together is possible. Heavenly families, in which group-wise the blessed are put together according to their nature, according to their talents, according to their gifts. And all of that social life in those mansions is one life for God's honor and in heavenly joy.

Heavenly families in heavenly mansions, which are not placed together according to their origin from one and the same blood, but after the plan of God's election. There is no death-sleep, neither is there a sitting in rows, and an endless singing of psalms. No, there is life and social life as in a family, and in that heavenly family-life a restless working, without ever becoming exhausted or weary. There is no day there and no night, but an eternal existence in glory.

In my Father's house are *many mansions*.

BUT also, and this is the second: These many mansions together form the one *Father-house*.

There is distinction, but in that distinction glorious unity.

There are no mansions alongside of the Father-house, or round about the Father-house, but all together they are included in the one Father-house. So far as the glorious circle of those mansions extends itself, so far also the Father-house extends itself.

On this earth the child leaves his father's house, to live in a house of his own. But it is not so in heaven. There is distinction there, but no separation. The blessed remain eternally in their Father's house, but in that one Father-house they have group-wise a mansion of their own.

The Temple at Jerusalem imaged this in a weak form.

There was the Holy of Holies, where God dwelt. And around that Holy of Holies there were rows of dwellings and upper-rooms, in which families came together, to keep the sacrificial feasts. And all this together formed the one temple.

Hence it is not so improbable, that Jesus borrowed His figurative language of the Father-house with its many mansions from the temple at Jerusalem.

But then this figurative language also implies, that in every mansion of the blessed above family-fellowship is enjoyed with the Eternal Being, and that in every mansion God indwells with His blessed, and that the blessed indwell with their Father.

More yet.

If all the mansions together form the one Father-house, it implies at the same time, that though the blessed dwell in mansions of their own, they have brotherly fellowship with the blessed in all the other mansions.

A fellowship between mansion and mansion, not to go in and out, but all together dwelling in the one Father-house.

Not a fellowship that annuls the particularization of the separate groups, but also no separation of groups that excludes the most intimate fellowship.

To this is added finally, that in those mansions Jesus *prepares His blessed a place.*

Upon this promise follow these words: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Hence our dying waits and tarries, until Jesus is ready with that preparing of our place. Then, in that hour of our death, He comes to us, takes us unto Himself, and leads us to that place, which He has prepared for us in the mansion assigned to us.

So He has not called all His apostles out of this world at once, but each in turn, and taken him to Himself, and given to each one the place prepared for him in the mansion assigned to him.

Bring to mind the white stone, with a name on it, which no one can read, save he who receiveth it, and you understand, that every one of the blessed is something different from every other one of the blessed, and correspondingly shall have eternally a task, which no other one receives, save he.

They are not all engaged in the same work, but in the one great work of the Kingdom of heaven, each blessed one has his own calling, his own destiny, his

own life's task, and for that life's task his own gift, his own talent, his own grace.

There can no one be missed. For in that case the work would remain incomplete, and the coöperation of all must take place in blessed, Divine, perfect harmony.

This requires ordering, disposition, an impenetrable rich counsel. And Jesus as Head of the church brings this ordering, this disposing to pass, and He knows, at what given moment the heavenly task of every blessed must begin.

When that moment is come, it coincides absolutely with the hour of our dying, which is known unto God and His Christ.

And also, at the moment of our dying, the one great work of the Kingdom must have advanced so far, that our task in it can begin.

He who entered too early, would not find his place prepared. He who entered his mansion too late, would find the work marred by an irreparable blank.

And this is "the preparing a place" on the part of Jesus, that as Head of the Body, and as King of the Kingdom of God, He so directs the great work of the Kingdom, that at the very moment of our dying the moment has also come, when our task above must make a beginning; for which everything is prepared, to make our entrance upon the great work possible; and at which moment the work of the Lord Jehovah would not be able to go on, without our taking our place in our heavenly mansion, and in that mansion entering upon our task.

VIII

"They Serve Him Day and Night"

IF in the Father-house there are *many* mansions, and if, as King of the kingdom of God, Christ is busy day and night, in putting *a place in readiness* for each of the redeemed, against the moment of their death, the question rises of itself, whether after our dying, and until the resurrection of the dead, a task awaits us, and whether already now our dead, who went before, are engaged in a work with God.

Many mansions can not merely mean, mansions with room for all God's elect. This were equally thinkable in one and the selfsame mansion. Even now one finds hotels with room for two thousand and more guests. Only then does that "many mansions" come to its own, when it is taken in the sense, that there is in every mansion a family-life of its own, differing from that in the other mansions. This provides the representation, that the blessed do not spread themselves in endless rows of thousands and tens of thousands, but that group-wise they are put together, by groups have a closer affiliation, and that that closer affiliation makes them form a circle in a mansion of their own.

If only so this "many mansions" comes to its own, this interpretation is strengthened by Jesus' word, that there He prepares a place for us. This "preparing a place" can not refer to the work of atonement as such, for that *was* finished. And Jesus does not say: "I have prepared a place for you," but: "I go to prepare a place

for you." Hence this "preparing a place" is something that Jesus is doing in heaven, and which only began after His Ascension.

Now "preparing a place" suggests, that after dying, every one finds his place ready in one of the many mansions. If it were the destiny of the blessed to be crowded together in endless rows, there could be no mention of "preparing a place." Then every one's place would indicate itself, alongside of or behind the last departed.

If on the other hand that place must be ready, and be indicated in one of the different mansions, and if in every one of these mansions the place of one is different from the place of the other, it is plain that this preparing a place is a glorious work of art, to have every one of the blessed *there* to take his place, and at the moment of his dying to have *that* place in readiness for him, which suits his disposition, his spiritual talents and his calling.

Such a place indeed for every blessed is but one. Confusion and mistake is herewith unthinkable.

And that at our entrance into heaven every one of us shall be different from all the rest, follows immediately from what Jesus spake at Patmos, that He will give us a white stone, with a name engraven upon it, which no one knoweth save he who receiveth it.

Thus that name on the white stone must cohere with the place which separately and specially is prepared for every one.

BUT then we must needs go one step further, and con-

clude from this, that already now all the blessed in heaven, have a work to do for God.

That this shall be so on the new earth under the new heaven, after the youngest day, is nothing strange. On that new earth, in the realm of glory, both an invisible and a visible human life shall flourish, and that this can not consist of eternal emptiness and idleness, needs no further demonstration.

But this is altogether different, when we confine ourselves to the life we shall live from the day of our dying until the last judgment. This period of existence is mostly represented as one of idleness, or of consisting only of praising and giving thanks. But this is not what Scripture reveals unto us.

For in Revelation 7, 15 we read of the blessed, long before the resurrection of the dead, and of them it is said, that "they serve God day and night." And also in the messages to the seven churches we read, that to him that overcometh Jesus shall give power *to shepherd* others (2, 26-7), that Jesus will put him on a throne *to rule* (3, 21), and that Jesus will make him *a pillar, to bear* the temple of God (3, 12).

Nothing here suggests a condition of idleness and of doing *nothing*, but strengthens the representation of a being busy and doing *much*. It will be a work, that goes on "day and night," and consists in serving, guarding, ruling, up-bearing the kingdom of God.

Also what Jesus says elsewhere, that our dead are "as the angels in heaven" leads to the same representation. The angels indeed do not sit still, but serve God and do battle for His honor, and ceaselessly bring into execution the high command, which from God goes out to them.

THE false representation regarding this owes its origin to an altogether wrong idea of the *eternal Sabbath*.

When of the Lord our God it is written, that in six days He created heaven and earth and all that therein is, and that then He *rested from His labor*, it is wrong to understand this as a cessation of the Divine work.

The actual work of Creation ceased, and took an end, but only then began the work of Providence.

Hence, in the face of this false interpretation, we have the positive word of Jesus: "*My Father worketh hitherto.*"

Thus Sabbath-rest is no putting to sleep the powers of one's life, but altogether differently, to divert that life-power from a special work, and now direct it in full to one's real work.

So when it also says, that there "remaineth a rest for the people of God," it does not mean, that with death a never-ending worklessness begins, on the contrary, it means, that then trouble, distress, being haunted and exhausted ceases, and that an altogether new condition arises, in which the blessed, liberated from every foreign power that inworked upon their life and drove them on, will now come to the free, unrestrained and rich unfolding of their indwelling powers.

By itself this is not otherwise thinkable.

Our blessed are not dead, but *live*. And life postulates *action*. Life without an emanation of strength were absurd.

Of Jesus in His exaltation no one dreams that He sits down doing nothing. We all know, that Jesus not only said: "the Father worketh hitherto," but that he also added: "*and I work.*" We can not even think of

one redeemed, who did not experience the work of Jesus on his own soul.

Meanwhile we stand confused, when we are asked, wherein that work of the blessed consists.

Scripture itself describes it as a *serving*, a *guarding*, a *ruling*, a *bearing*, as a pillar bears the temple-roof; but every closer and more definite idea is withheld.

Yet this does not need to make us doubt the truth of the fact itself.

When a domestic sharpens knives and brushes clothes, and the master of the house whom he serves sits all day long quietly at his study-table reading or thinking, it is perfectly natural that that domestic thinks: "I work hard and my master accomplishes nothing." He has no other idea of work save as manual labor, and that one can work far more exhaustingly, without wearying his muscles, is unintelligible to him.

When on the field of battle the common soldier struggles until he is no more able, and finally sinks down in his blood, while the general on a hill-top sits quietly on his horse, and does nothing save now and then, speak to his adjutant, he who has no understanding of it thinks, that that soldier bore the heat of the day and that that general quietly looked on and did nothing.

So there is already here on earth so heaven-wide a difference between work and work, that he who spends his days in the lower kind of work, can form no idea even, wherein that higher work consists.

And is it then so unnatural, that we, who know no other work than in this earthly economy, can not even form for ourselves a faint representation of what the work of the blessed is?

Yet we know well, that here on earth already the work stands higher and is more exhausting, the less physical, and the more purely invisible of nature it is. And when one knows, that for the blessed until the day of judgment all physical inmingling with labor falls away, and that their work is purely a spiritual work, is it not plain, that such spiritual work is abundant work, even ceaseless work, and work of an higher nature, even though we are not able to explain it?

OF course the group-wise division of the blessed must cohere with this.

On earth the division of the "many mansions" is not like this. Here division proceeds from wedlock and from birth. And in one house together live man and wife and children and domestics, who as regards their work are altogether different.

Grouping according to *labor and talents* you do not find in the family on earth, but in commerce and industry, with art and science, also with the army.

It is noteworthy, that Scripture never compares the work and the mode of existence of angels with family-life, but always with the *army*.

They are "heavenly hosts," they form a "heavenly battle array," they are called "Mahanaim," i.e., hosts encamped, and also: Chariots of God, which means chariots of war. Thus altogether images borrowed from the army, which can have no other meaning, than that their division into groups is governed by the work in which they have to serve God.

If now the blessed are as "angels of God in heaven

and occupy different mansions,” and if therein a separate place is prepared for every one of them, is it not evident, that their division also and grouping is governed by their task?

“They do not marry,” says Jesus, “and are not given in marriage.” The tie borrowed from family-life, which has its origin in blood, does not exist above. And what other tie would there be, except the tie that lies in the particular work, which they have to perform in the service of their God?

That particular part of God’s work, which is put to their account, hangs exclusively together with their peculiar disposition and their particular talent. And so similar spirits are grouped together, in harmony to make all gifts and talents fit and dovetail in the work which to them as group jointly and commonly is appointed.

Hence a rich order, whereby every one occupies his own place, a place appropriate to his disposition and gifts, and in that place they labor and coöperate with other blessed, who in undivided harmony join themselves to them and adopt them in their own circle.

Even so the difficulty remains, that it is so hard for us to think of a soul, separated from the body, as being busy. For this reason many have spoken of a sleep of the dead. Already in his days Calvin had to oppose such as held this view.

But are not angels pure spirit, and is not the fact that they work evident in all Scripture?

And what ends all, is not the Lord our God Himself pure spirit, and is not He the All-worker, Who never wearies nor grows faint and bears all things by the word of His power?

IX

*“Walks Among Those Who Stand
Before God”*

By “those who stand before God” the host of angels is indicated, that in standing before the Throne expresses its readiness and disposition, to carry into execution the high command, that goes out toward it.

The nature of angels is not “governing” but “serving,” and it is in the representation of the angel *standing* before God’s Throne, that this “serving” character is expressed.

The blessed elect also “serve,” but to them is likewise given that with Christ they sit upon His Throne, and *sitting* is token of superiority, of dominion.

To make it evident that to the exalted Redeemer a name is given above every name, it is said, and by us confessed, that He is “*seated* at the right hand of God.”

When, therefore, in the prophecy of Zechariah (3, 7, Dutch version) it is said, that the Lord will give them “walks among those who stand before God,” it means, that the separation between life here and life above will in part for them be brought to nought.

Joshua himself is still on earth, the angels who stand before God, are in heaven. And now, notwithstanding this Joshua will have fellowship with that higher life about God’s Throne. He will not *dwell* there yet, not yet permanently abide there, for the city of his habitation is still this world. But as, for the sake of

breathing in fresh air and of enjoying God's rich nature, the inhabitants of walled towns, after the day's task is done, pass through the city-gate, to have *walks outside*, so it will be with Joshua.

He will still dwell on earth, but to escape earthly heaviness, and to breathe in fresh air of the soul, he will continually go out from this world and with his spirit have *walks* among the angels before God's Throne, that strengthened by this access to God's Throne, he may return to his life-task here below.

These walks among the spirits before God's Throne, Joshua himself can not *take*. They must be *given* him. For to the nearest surrounding of the Throne no one has access, save he who is admitted.

Therefore it reads: "I, saith the Lord, will *give* thee walks among those that stand by."

And though it be, that here this sacred privilege is accorded exclusively to Joshua, in his capacity as high priest, this merely applied under the Old Covenant as exclusion and limitation. Under the New Covenant all who are in Christ have the *anointing* of the Holy One, and every redeemed has his place in the royal priesthood, and as *priest* has access to his God.

YET there must be a reason, a cause, why God the Lord accorded this privilege to Joshua *in this form*.

By itself you would have expected, that it read: "I will admit you, give you access to the Throne of grace, to me as your God, to the heart of your Father Who is in heaven."

But so it does not read.

There is here no mention of direct fellowship with the Eternal Being, but of walks among angels. Though in tendency this means the same, yet it diverges in form of expression, and it is to this, that our attention directs itself.

The deepest urge of mysticism always directs itself to fellowship with the Eternal Being Himself, but this brings the danger with it, that in her homesickness the soul wants to enter into the very Being of God, and thereby lapses into gruesome sacrilege.

Alas, the history of mystics abounds all too sadly with incidents of this sort. What in *this* way began with spirit, in the end mingled spirit and flesh, by not reverencing the boundaries between God and His creature.

And this danger is here averted, by that God the Lord points to the *life-world* around His Throne.

The antithesis is not: God and the world, but altogether different: our *poor life-world* here on earth and the *rich life-world* above around God's Throne. Even as the holy apostle makes the antithesis when he says: “If then ye be risen with Christ, seek *the things* that are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your affections on *things* above, not on things on *the earth*” (Col. 3, 1, 2). Or if you will, as it reads in the epistle to the Hebrews: the *better fatherland* (country), as over against the *alienship* in the world here below.

Not therefore an infinite emptiness above us, and in the center of that chill, lifeless infinitude the Eternal God. No, but God in the heaven of His glory, and therein, around Him, a world of life which in splendor and riches far excels all splendor of earth.

Not the death of vacuity, but the fulness of the life

around the Throne of the Lord God. And in that world of life above the angels first appearing before us, even as upon entering a royal fortress here you first see the *servants*, and only after that enter upon the rich *life-world* of the princely house.

This speaking of *walks* expresses this yet more closely.

It is not alone a sight of the companies of the Lord's body-staff which is announced to Joshua. The word *walks* expresses far more.

At a parade the people may see the hosts of the king, and from afar look at the brilliant sight of their appearance and movements, but must remain at a distance.

Into their ranks and companies no one may introduce himself. The people that come to look on, and the army that parades, remain two.

When on the other hand a triumphant army comes home, and within the gates is greeted by a grateful people, it does not take long for the distinction to fall away, and on the square where arms are laid down, the people at once mingle with the soldiers, press their hands, bring them presents, and soon the people have *walks* among the victory-crowned troops. Arm in arm the soldier and citizen walk through the town.

That God the Lord gives to Joshua, and thus also to every one who has the anointing of the Holy One, walks among those who stand before God's Throne, indicates therefore far more than a *look upon* that rich life-world with God.

It implies, that to a certain extent we are already now at home in that rich life-world, that we belong to that world around God's Throne, that we have fellowship

with that world, that our citizenship is there, and that far from being held at a distance, we are already now admitted to more intimate association with that life-world.

EXPERIENCE of this we have at one time very strongly, at another time only faintly, and most of the time not at all.

By far most hours of the day, and very certainly most days of our life, we spend *without* being privileged to have such walks among the hosts of God.

To him who separated from the world, quiet and alone, spends his days, this may be different. He who on earth has a busy, much embracing life's task (be it indoors or out of doors) which awaits him at rising, before he sleeps keeps him engaged upon his bed, and all day long holds his attention in arrest, can only occasionally give himself to quiet musing and restful meditation.

Such an oasis in life these busy people frequently only find on the Sabbath, that good gift of our God.

Beyond that this fellowship floats upon the brief moments when we give ourselves somewhat more earnestly than commonly to prayer. But it only really takes place effectively, when God takes hold of us, shakes and rouses us, and the ground of our existence here below trembles beneath our feet.

Also the dying of those who walked with us on the pilgrim-way has here high significance.

Nothing so of itself draws the heart above as the knowledge, that one entered that world above, who on

earth could not be separated from the love of our heart.

Yet even this fellowship with the world of life above is no *continuous state*, but one by exception accorded grace.

It is only God's lovingkindness, which at times and certain seasons, and every time anew *gives* us these *walks* among His angels.

You make no boisterous entrance there.

The gate must be unlocked for you. And that opening before you of the gate, that every time again love does, the grace, the lovingkindness of the Lord our God.

OF itself the character of these walks is that they only take place in our *conscious life*.

The holy apostle says: "Set your affections on things above." And to *set the affections* is something that takes place in our consciousness.

What here leads and moves us on is not an unconscious, unknown feeling, but a *conscious act*. It is by clear thinking that such an entrance into the world above alone is possible. And that clear thinking of itself becomes richer, as you take firmer hold of that world of life above, make greater advances from the indefinite to the definite, and give your representation no play in wild phantasies, but let it be governed by the Word of God.

But though these "walks" can only take place by clear thinking, and by deep thinking, yet let no one say that therefore they are unreal.

Our Psalmody literally lives from the note, that we *lift up our soul* above.

Not we here, and God afar off, and now as philosopher we from afar quietly thinking of God and of the world above.

That separation and that distance Scripture never tolerates.

And when we would lift up our thoughts and our representations above, it is not something *of* us that must go above, but *the soul itself* must go above.

"Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul," it reads in Psalm 25, and in Psalm 143 David exclaims: *"I lift up my soul unto Thee, deliver me, for I flee unto Thee to hide me."*

A thought still more strongly expressed in Psalm 57: *"In the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge."* And in Psalm 61, 4: *"I will abide in thy tabernacle."*

Thus it is an act of the consciousness. It goes through our thinking, considering and altogether entering into it.

But in that action of our consciousness we *ourselves* are. Therein is our *person*. Therein is our *ego*. Therein is our *life*. There is *our soul*.

And that lifting up is possible, because there is One Who draws us to Himself. One Who for a moment breaks the bands that bind us too strongly to earth, and also joins the bands, which make us experience and enjoy in our heart the unity of life with the world above.

“With a Great Voice”

NUMBERS are relative.

He who from a country-hamlet for the first time comes to a town, is surprised at its size, while he in turn who comes from a town to a great city, sees his town vanish from sight. And so it goes on step by step. What is Amsterdam as compared with Paris? And what is Paris by the side of London?

So it is with respect to meetings, with gatherings, with the massing-together of people. A full village church or a full market-place at a village festival is the largest crowd of people, which a villager can vividly imagine. The square at Amsterdam full of people, when the Queen appears on the balcony of the palace, is already ten times more. Yet what is our full square by the side of the hundred thousands which London brings together at one parade?

And far more strongly evident is this relative character of all numbers, when you compare life here with life above.

This is already true with respect to the firmament, for who counts the dots in the milky way? And it shows itself more clearly still, when you consider the numbers of heavenly reckoning.

On Patmos, as St. John tells us, he heard God's angels before the Throne sing with a great voice the song of the Lamb. And when he looked up he heard that the

number of angels was: *ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands.*

Now $10,000 \times 10,000$ is already *one hundred million*. Thus $10,000 \times 10,000$ s is at least two or three *hundred million*. And to this is added the “thousand times thousands,” i.e., still several millions more.

It certainly will not do, to give these numbers as a sum in statistical lists. In Revelation, for instance, numbers express an *idea* of magnitudes, no results of measurement. They merely tend, in symbolism of numbers to give you an idea of quantities and of the constituents of those quantities.

The every time recurring 144,000 is not taken by actual count, but express the $12 \times 12 \times 1000$, in which 12 again is equal to 3×4 , a product in which three expresses the holy, four the cosmical; and this multiplication is again multiplied by 1,000, i.e., by 10 to the third power to express the idea of perfection of all living creatures of earth who by grace appear blessed before God.

Also the more than 2 or 300 million of angels does not refer to statistics, but tends to give you an idea of the interminable multitudes of heavenly hosts and of their interminable ordination.

As we say, that “we can walk over people’s heads,” or that it is “black with people,” so here in the Apocalypse this mighty, round number indicates, that the angelic host as it were undulates in endless and interminable length and breadth and depth around the Throne of God.

AND yet, notwithstanding that this multitude of heavenly hosts was so great that it defies all comparison with human gatherings here on earth, the holy apostle tells us, that he heard this innumerable multitude sing, heard them sing with one great voice, and that he could overhear what they sang.

So indeed he tells us. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the Throne, saying *with a great voice*: "The Lamb that is slain, is worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and thanksgiving!" (Rev. 5, 11, 12).

And now we well know, that here we have to do with a vision, and that this also can not be taken as a literal description of reality thus revealing itself, yet so much is clear, that in this way an *idea* was imparted to the apostle of the mode of existence in the heavens.

What now is implied in that idea?

Even this. That in the world above with God groups of living beings of such mighty proportions attain unto fellowship and unity of utterance, that everything that we observe regarding this on earth in churches, at meetings or on public squares, by the side of this simply sinks away into nothingness.

The shortness of our vision, the limited scope of our voice, and the boundary of distinct hearing are bound with us to so small a distance, that fellowship and unity of utterance for *one single million persons* among us is absolutely unthinkable. Four persons taken to the square meter, which is already very crowded, it would take a square of 250,000 square meters, to accommodate them all. And if this were thinkable, how

could you ever bring such a multitude to clear, distinct utterance of voice and song?

And yet on Patmos St. John receives the idea, the impression of a multitude, which is several hundred times greater.

For this reason in Revelation every time again the indication of that *great voice*.

THAT “great voice” is expressed another time by speaking of “a voice *as when a lion roareth*” (10, 3), “a voice *as of thunder*” (6, 1), or of “a voice of many waters” (14, 2).

Especially this last expression is graphic. For, when the storm is risen, from how far a distance you hear the rushing and the roaring of the great sea, as it lashes shore and dunes with its booming waves. Yet these mighty waves are nothing but collected water-drops. And so is the voice of that interminable undulating multitude, in which every angel or every blessed one by himself is nothing but one single water-drop.

Does not all this point to a practice of fellowship above, which very far transcends every limit of *our* practice of fellowship on earth?

Unimpeded practice of fellowship, by mutual self-expression, does not for the most part extend among us beyond half a hundred persons. In well ordered gatherings it reaches at most the number of half a thousand. And one-sided speaking of one, while others hear, finds its boundary already at ten thousand. Full fellowship of life in conversation on the other hand is for by far

the most of us limited to the very narrow circle of some twenty persons.

Over against this Holy Scripture gives us in every way the impression, that in the world above there are virtually *no* boundaries to this practice of fellowship, and that of our limitation by reason of distances, not a shadow of evidence is found above.

Of course all this can not be portrayed otherwise than by images borrowed from this life. Other language we do not understand. But when angels receive wings and fly from one end of the heavens to the other, when they blow trumpets with a sound that penetrates all heavens, and when we read of the general assembly in the one Father-house of all just men made perfect, yea, of millions of beings who in unison express themselves in such a way, that not only their voice is heard, but also what they say and sing is understood, all this gives us the impression of a life of fellowship by nothing arrested or limited, of a fellowship of saints such as no one on earth has ever even remotely known or surmised.

OF this rich practice of fellowship the fundamental thought lies in God Himself.

Every one feels and knows that in every place he can practice fellowship with God, and that there is never one moment, when God is not able to hear our prayer. The omnipresence of God is for God's child no abstraction, but a reality. On one side it is the practice of fellowship in prayer, and on the other side it is the ever-present experience of the nearness of God,

when our sins do not banish this from our heart.

Of our Savior altogether the same holds true. Distance never breaks our fellowship of soul with the High Priest in the sanctuary above.

When Holy Scripture shows that among angels also there is a practice of fellowship, which puts all our idea of earthly practice of fellowship in the shade, is it not self-evident of the blessed also to believe, that man, created after the image of God, in his highest consummation, shall be able and called to similar fellowship, no longer bound by narrow limitations?

Even development of life here on earth points very definitely in like direction.

First there was no fellowship among people save through the spoken word, and not only every country, but almost every hamlet and village lived apart.

Then came *writing*, and at once communication at distances became possible. After writing came the *press* by which wealth and rapidity of communication was increased tenfold. Steam once more accelerated that same communication. Finally telegraph and telephone rendered communication possible at farthest distances. Even now already the *wireless* operates, i.e., a means, without wire, to practice fellowship directly through the air. And who shall say what acceleration and simplification all this will yet undergo in the coming century?

What lies in the fundamental idea of man's creation after God's image and what Holy Scripture tells of life above, tallies altogether with what development of life here on earth already begins to reveal in ever clearer lines. And so it is not said too strongly, when we believe in a life of fellowship and a mutual practice of

communication among the blessed above, which is bound by no limitation, but extends itself throughout the *whole* Father-house, in *all* mansions above, and to *all* the blessed.

Do you fathom the depth of the enrichment of life which this implies?

Life without fellow-creatures is to vegetate. Only by living with others does our own life become *life* in the full sense of the word.

We are not a collection of grains of sand, but as people we are organically one and bound up with other people. This living together of one communal life is the life of love, and love spreads beams of light, which reflected from the mirror of every blessed soul, multiply themselves a thousand and ten-thousandfold, and only thus pour forth the full splendor of richest and most glorious light.

Already here on earth your heart is richer in the measure in which you share sweet and bitter with others; through the web of their life weave the threads of your own life's web, and in the intimacy of their utterance of life find food and warmth for your own existence of soul.

And yet, to how few does not this limit itself here on earth! Your intimate circle is already large when it enjoys the cherishing of a two dozen grown persons.

And it is this limitation which once takes an end, to flow out in a full practice of fellowship with all God's saints.

Even then with difference. The *many* mansions

point to a closer union with those who are one of mind, of disposition, of talent and calling.

But yet, with all together it remains one living together in the one Father-house.

And thereby shall your heart wake up to an energy of love and life of fellowship, such as here had never entered your heart. To a fellowship bound to no place, and to a fellowship limited to no time. A fellowship no more *by* means, but *without* means. A fellowship going out from being to being and from heart to heart. And every time when by dying, by the new entering into heaven of one whom God called to come up higher, the company of the just made perfect extends itself, there will also be new gains for you in behalf of the wealth of the life of your heart.

And then only will you understand aright what *love* is.

Not to stand by the weak and take compassion upon the wretched, for that you will no longer be able to do in heaven.

Misery there has ceased.

No, but a life expressing itself in an endless living together *with* and inliving *in* others, and only in the life of love with others discover the wealth and enjoy the wealth, which God was pleased to create in you by giving you a *human heart*.

“The Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect”

WE can not hold too closely to the conviction of our fathers, that our being, as man, is not tripartite, but bipartite. We do not consist of body, soul and spirit, but bipartite of body and soul.

Neither must it be said, that an unrebored man consists merely of soul and body, but that the rebored sinner obtained a third something, to wit, a spirit. For what we become partakers of in regeneration is not a human spirit, but God’s Spirit, Who then is said to dwell in us, so that we are God’s temple. Moreover, in Holy Scripture it is not only said of those who have been endowed with grace, but also of the lost, that they are *spirits*. Of the elect we read, that “the *spirits* of just men made perfect” (Hebr. 12, 23) are with God, but likewise in 1 Peter 3, 19 that “the *spirits* which are in prison,” were lost by reason of their disobedience.

Thus all the dead are called *spirits*, those who died in Jesus, as well as those who in their dying did not have Jesus.

And these same dead are also called *souls*. Do we not read in Rev. 6, 9: “I saw under the altar *the souls* of them that were slain for the Word of God.” Also in Rev. 20, 4: “I saw *the souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus.”

Yet for this reason *soul* and *spirit* do not express the same thing.

When the invisible of our being must be expressed,

in distinction from our visible body, it is almost always called *soul*, and almost never *spirit*.

If on the other hand it must be expressed, how from our invisible life, independently of the body, power, action, life goes out, then spirit is the most-telling word.

He who was dead in sin, had then in higher sense no *spirit* in him. And he whose soul from that death in sin was made alive, is called a *spiritual* man, partly because he is led by *the Spirit*, partly because the life of his soul has come to its true action.

This had to be observed here, because especially from all sorts of German books the real-German representation, as though a man consists of body, soul and spirit, has of late also found entrance among us, and especially by means of the schools.

We, however, must abide by what Jesus said: “Be not afraid of them that kill the *body*, but can not kill the soul, but fear far more Him, Who can cast *soul and body* into hell” (Luke 12, 4).

Thus alone *soul and body*.

But when it must be expressed, that that soul wakes up to higher consciousness, to sanctified power, the word *spirit* is employed.

Therefore the Word of God, as a two-edged sword pierces even to the dividing asunder of *soul and spirit* (Hebr. 4, 12), and the prayer ascends, that the God of peace preserve blameless the altogether upright *spirit and soul and body* unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5, 23).

THIS is also of application to our dead.

When they appear passive, as victims of persecution, they are called: "the *souls* of them that have been killed." But when they are spoken of as those who live by faith, they are called: "*the spirits* of just men made perfect." Or when they are spoken of as continuing in their unbelief, they are called "the *spirits* that are in prison."

This lies in the word itself.

When the Queen of Sheba stands confused by reason of the wealth of Solomon's kingship, it is said, "that there was no more *spirit* in her." Angels in their active service are called *spirits*. Also *demons* when by their evil power they hold a human soul in restraint, are called *spirits*. He who dies, i.e., he whose activity ceases, is said "to give up the spirit." *Spirit* literally means: blowing, i.e., the going out of power that was at first in hiding.

So we call a person small-souled, pitiful, one who sits down passively, and from whom no action goes out, and on the other hand a "man full of *spirit*," one who by wondrous activity announces himself.

Even in the Holy Spirit lies this idea of action. Therefore one is spoken of as "full of power and of the Holy Ghost," one who is full of *power* by the Holy Spirit.

Hence it is wrong, when one speaks of his dead as *souls*. For this carries the impression of a will-less, powerless existence, without initiative of one's own and without exhibition of power.

When on the other hand we speak of "*the spirits* of just men made perfect," we receive an altogether opposite impression.

Spirits are beings, in whom something presses and urges and impels, and who thereby are capable of highest activity.

That this activity with our dead does not go out from their *body*, but from their soul alone, speaks for itself.

And yet to represent them to ourselves in action, as at work in the work of God, we must not think of them as *souls*, but as *spirits*, who are blessed in the service of their God.

HEREWITH, however, we stumble upon an almost insuperable difficulty.

For in life here on earth no single act or utterance of will or transaction is thinkable, except *through* or with the *help* of the body. How, then, can we think of deeds and activities in our dead, after they have been separated from their body, and continue to be deprived of their body until Jesus' return?

He who faints, can at that moment not do anything, because he lost power over his body.

When in sleep the operation of the soul upon the body is reduced to almost nothing, we may dream, and in those dreams enjoy ourselves or suffer anxiety, but when presently we wake, that world of dreams dissolves itself into nothing, and the night lies back of us as so much lost time.

It is very possible, even probable, that in sleep certain development goes on in our spirit, but at waking we do not sense in the least, that we did this our-

selves, and nothing gives us the impression that we personally in sleep have advanced our spirit.

If it appears that in sleep we have obtained clearer, deeper insight into something, we are under the grateful impression, that God has done this, while we slept; not that *we ourselves* in sleep have thought out or continued our study.

Without the body we are not active.

This even goes so far that our whole world of thought, the whole world of our representations is not clear to us otherwise, than through what our body with its organs of sense observes in the outside world.

Yea even the language which we speak is virtually constructed altogether from representations, which are borrowed from the outside world of visible things.

Feeling is derived from the sense of touch, *grasping* (understanding) from grasping with the hand.

When with the body everything that belongs to it falls away from us, together with everything that coheres with the visible world, by itself it is absolutely inexplicable, how the spirits of the dead have anything left wherewith to *think*, to *represent* to themselves, to *will*, let alone to *do*.

As a rule there is little thought devoted to this condition of the dead. This avenges itself with a vagueness of idea regarding life after death. And with this he who takes eternal life seriously, can have no lasting peace.

No language which to speak, no visible world from which to borrow images and representations, from which to form ideas, thus also memory torn from its

connection with life, how then is clear consciousness, how the choosing of an object, how a direction of strength to that object, how especially coöperation with others to attain that object thinkable?

Altogether questions, which simply will not allow themselves to be dismissed, and which call for solution.

You have read of "innate ideas." In that form surely a false notion. But is there no deep truth fundamental to this?

Think of the millions and millions that are carried from the cradle to the grave, which thus never have spoken human language, which never have inlived in the visible world, which have never heard of our world of thought. Have all these entered into heaven, knowing nothing, and destined eternally to continue in their absolute unconsciousness and ignorance? And do they, who die in maturity, when they open their eye in eternity, stand on a line with these souls of little ones that know nothing?

Is the heavenly life an idiotic life? It has been called a sleep of soul. But this is not yet strong enough. In sleep there is always yet a partial consciousness in our dreams. Here, then, it would be an idiotic condition.

Or is the life of consciousness on earth, which then passes away, suddenly superseded by an altogether other consciousness, which has nothing in common with our life here on earth, neither has anything to do with it?

In that case every relation between life here and life above falls away, and in turn it can not be understood, how our Mediator, in our flesh in the Sanctuary serves in our behalf at the altar of reconciliation, and prays for us.

Now look at an altogether different series of thoughts, and at once a surprising light will rise upon you.

The world, before it was created, was in God from eternity. In His Divine Plan. In the Counsel of His will.

Only by Creation does the world enter upon reality, while in the life of God's consciousness it was *from the beginning*.

Now we, and thus also the life of our human consciousness, are created after the Image of God. Hence there must be relation and coherence between the germ of our consciousness, and the creaturely world in which God has realized His eternal thoughts.

No "innate *ideas*," for ideas originate from reflection. But the background of our consciousness can not be empty, but must be the creaturely reflection of the world of thought, of the life of consciousness in God.

Representations, images, means of language taken from this visible world, must be adaptable to our human consciousness, for the reason that in that visible world God realizes His own thought, and has implanted in us a copy of His Divine consciousness.

If now, as takes place in dying, you take away that middle-link of the visible world, you become again as *a little child*, and from the root of your own life of consciousness there works up again, what as bearer of the Image of God and thus also of the image of the Divine consciousness you possess, and that rich content then unfolds itself in harmony with that high world in which you opened your eye.

So then he who from the cradle was carried to the

grave is of like condition with him who died in later life.

The whole mystery lies in what Jesus so frequently and with so much emphasis put into the foreground: "You must become as *the little child*, and then you will see the glory of God."

“The Spirit of Man Which Is in Him”

HE who from the grave turns homeward and remains behind, continually tries to bring his dead before him. Only, and this is noteworthy, we bring our dead before us, not as they now are, but as they were before they died. That is to say, not as *spirits*, but in their visible, *observable* form.

For this reason we prize *the likeness* of our dead. Just after the dying there is no need of this. Then emotions are most strongly stimulated, and the representation operates so clearly, that memory without likeness perfectly suffices. But when weeks and months are passed and activities of many sorts keep us from concentrating the attention upon this particular remembrance, the representation once so clear and vivid becomes blurred and the likeness is welcome.

To that likeness, and to that representation of the observable form we remain attached, even though we give ourselves full account of it, that our dead are no longer like that, that they have laid off their material garment, and now body-less, and hence unobservable to the eye, dwell in one of the many mansions with God.

We try indeed in our representation to ennoble the image that looms from memory, something which artist-painters sometimes express symbolically, by surrounding the head with an halo; but even so it still remains the visible appearance, and think of our dead as of *spirits*, we can almost never do.

Even angels, who are pure spirit, when they would reveal themselves appeared in visible form, speaking as we speak to each other. And where superstition imagined to be aware of shades or evil spirits, there always appeared before their confused imagination something vague and gray, but yet a something of a certain outline and certain tints.

Only of spirits who held possessed ones under their power, we read that they “tore” their victims, and “cast them into fire” without the bystanders becoming aware of any form or any figure of those spirits themselves. Yet even in these cases it was an operation, which was perceived upon a *visible* person, and which showed itself in tangible deeds.

By itself on the other hand a spirit, without a shape in which he clothes himself, without a form in which he appears, and without a tangible working in which he exercises his power, falls outside of our common grasp.

We can *talk* about it, in the *idea* something like this can exist, but *reality* it does not become to us.

YET do not forget, that so and not otherwise the mode of existence of all our dead is, and that no other lot awaits us, than, after shaking off our body in dying, until the resurrection of the dead, purely to exist as *spirits*.

If in spite of this we continue to be attached almost exclusively to the visible appearance of our dead, there is a continuous life of memory, but no life with them in the present. Thus with every passing year, the distance which separates us from them becomes greater.

Result of this is, that in many families, which at first almost passionately held themselves close to the memory of their beloved dead, after the lapse of but a few years this memory is seen gradually more and more wearing away.

And also as regards our own soul's existence, this has its serious side, that that state of separation from the body remains so foreign to us. Thereby the thought of death remains too nebulous, and anticipation of our future after death too rare and comfortless.

Undoubtedly God the Lord created us spirit *and* matter, and it is unnatural not to count the material side of our being and to ignore it. But *the root of our being* must always be sought in the spirit and not in the flesh, in the soul and not in the body. And the balance is broken, the moment we become so one-sidedly distressed in the visible, that, taken apart from the material vesture, the spirit ceases to be real to us.

Faith here comes to our aid. Faith, which "is the evidence of things not seen." And, will it be well, the real and actual existence of "our spirit, that is in us," altogether apart from matter, flesh or body, must address us so clearly and positively, that sooner than taking the spirit in us as semblance, we will credit the visible as optical illusion.

THIS is none too strongly put.

Is it not true that spirit created everything visible, and never what is visible, spirit?

The deepest foundation of all faith is here at stake. Faith that God created heaven and earth, and

that that God is *a spirit*. Only spirit. Nothing but spirit in Himself. And in His spiritual Self-sufficiency independent of everything that visibly exists.

The visible world is additional to God. In Himself He is the Eternal Being, the substance of all realities, Who gives to all things being and life.

In the eternal Object of our worship we therefore have the convincing proof, that altogether apart from form or stature, in the most absolute sense a spirit has real existence, and that to this real existence of the spirit nothing is ever added by matter or form.

Angels show us altogether the same thing. Also angels are *spirits*, without visible appearance. That in our behalf they have appeared to us in a shape created for this purpose by God's almightiness, takes here nothing away from it. And though it be, that in the visions of Isaiah and St. John they appear in symbolical form; in themselves angels are really nothing but spirits. Incorporeality belongs to their state..

Thus also in their blessed choirs they are to us the sacred model of entire hosts of beings, which exist exclusively as *spirit*, and which yet in this their pure *spiritual* existence serve God day and night and make the most glorious operations to go out from themselves.

Therefore God is called the *Father of spirits*, just for the sake of expressing that higher reality of everything that is spirit above the visible.

Of all the *visible* God is the *Creator*. That is His handiwork. But of all that is *spirit*, He is called the Father of spirits, therewith expressing the much closer tie, and the much nearer relation, which by nature as the Eternal Being, binds Him to all that as spirit received *being of its own*.

WHEN asked, to what realm man belongs, to the *visible* things or to the *spirits*, unhesitatingly you have to answer, that you also, even as the angel, *are spirit*, and that you also, as *spirit*, call upon God as the *Father of spirits*.

Surely, the completeness of your being lies in your having also part in the visible creation. Also after dying, at Jesus' return, the bodily appearance returns again, forever to be yours. But yet the ground of your being, the root of your existence, lies not in the body, but in your spirit. Not the spirit is given to your body, but your body to your spirit. And therefore, when in death the body for a time falls away from you, your being remains *your being*, you remain who you are, and now, without the bodily organ, your *spirit* unbrokenly continues its existence.

Your soul also exists by itself. You cannot say: it is here or it is there. *Our* local limitation or lack of freedom does not apply to it. There is also for our soul, after our dying a place where it abides, otherwise it would be omnipresent. It is in the Father-house. Closer yet it is in one of the many mansions of the Father-house. But we can not think of any connection between such a spirit and a given spot.

But this we know. Every soul of the departed is somewhere. That somewhere is in one of the many mansions. And in that mansion that soul is put into relation with other souls of the departed. And in that relation they are not passive, but they serve. Operations go out from them. And therefore they are *spirits*, come out as *spirits*, and as *spirits* fulfil their calling.

How spirits can work without the organ of the body, is not so readily understandable. Yet so much can be said, that the "working" of a spirit by itself, is the less understandable to you, the lower you stand as man, and on the other hand from afar it begins to become more transparent, the higher you ascend as man.

So long as your labor consists of actual manual work, it is almost impossible for you to think of pure spiritual exertion. But when your work calls you to almost no physical exertion, and you have to work almost exclusively with your head, so that at times your body is more in the way, than a help, you at least begin to understand something of this.

The student, who weary of thinking, must finally in the hour of night, abandon his work, because he is no longer able to go on, would, if you could sever the tie of the body, with the spirit still go on gloriously in his meditation.

This is more strongly evident, where genius reveals itself in the philosopher or singer or artists. Then it wells as from a fountain from the *spirit* within. Then the happy one knows very well, that it is the spirit that is in him, that presses and urges and makes power to go out. And when at another time he misses this inspiration, nothing comes, and he stands helpless, simply because the spirit that is in him ceased to work.

Working toward the outside is for real genius a secondary matter. The main thing is the working of the spirit within.

This must not be exaggerated. With highest forms of labor on earth we still remain bound to conceptions, ideas, words that are related with the visible world. Also

our imagination is populated by what enters in from without.

Hence it is not *the same* as the working of the spirits in the Father-house, but yet it gives an idea of it.

It shows at least how the spirit of man in itself can wake up to high activity. Yea, it furnishes the proof, that the work of our spirit stands the higher, and is the more intensive, the less it calls in the help of the visible.

WHETHER in that case all *spirits* of just men made perfect after their death have become geniuses? In the sense which we attach to it, certainly not.

But consider, not alone in the high flight of the intellect does the spirit that is in us muse and meditate independently of the body. There is in the spirit also the working of our heart, of the emotions, of fine feeling. And in that world also already here on earth work is done by our spirit. Wrestlings within and high tensions of our innermost being. Affliction battled-through and happiness deeply enjoyed, outside of the material. Above all, ecstasies in the fellowship of soul with the Eternal Being. Deep-going working of the spirit in us with the scarcely whispered prayer.

Thus from this side also already here on earth we know an activity of the spirit that is in us, outside of all material interference, and here upon a level, on which especially the quiet in the land are much engaged with their God.

And therefore, no, the idea is not so far distant, that after waking up in eternity, far from unconsciously sinking in, the spirit shall be capable rather of very

powerful tension and exhibition of elasticity and activity.

Capable not alone with them, who here on earth counted among the geniuses, but also with them who in the world of the heart unfolded their highest virtuosity.

The spirit of man, that is in him, is not dependent upon the body, in order as *spirit* to be able to muse and meditate; as spirit to be able to feel and to appreciate; as spirit, animated by God, to serve Him eternally.

XIII

"To Be Unbound"

AT dying we speak in a two-fold sense of unbinding. By death the soul is unbound from the body, and as the result of dying the body itself goes on to unbinding, i.e., to dissolution.

This means, that before dying, i.e., in the strength of our life, the soul binds the body and the body the soul. Two ties, therefore, which are unloosed by death. And so the soul is unbound from the tie of the body, and the body unbound from the tie of the soul.

In life there was mutual binding; by death there is mutual unbinding.

The unbinding, which liberates the body, is most readily understood, because it takes place in the *material*.

Our body consists of dust (matter), and even as in all other matter so in the matter of our body there operate certain powers. In these matters are chemical operations; there are vegetable, there are animal phenomena in them. And these several powers and operations, added to influences from without, come of themselves to disintegrate the body, and to dissolve it into its component parts.

So long as man lives, this does not succeed, because in the living man the soul holds all these powers and operations in leash, and compels them to render service. When the tie, by which the soul keeps all the workings in the body in leash is drawn but a little tightly or

unstitched, we are ill. And when finally death steps in, so that the soul lets that tie go altogether loose, there follows very speedily *unbinding*, i.e., the powers and workings, which thus far had been controlled by the soul, are now let loose, and the body, once so beautiful, is now unbound into its smallest component parts.

The body was built up from dust, and now by this unbinding it returns to dust again.

That there was also *an ordering something* in matter, by which at the construction of the body those millions of material particles (cells or parts of cells, as they are now called), imparted that wondrously beautiful form, and perfected those organs in us, and established those proportions of our two eyes, ears, etc., is certainly true. Even with smallest plants there is now more and more recognized such an ordering principle, such a regulating force.

But leaving this aside, is it not entirely clear, that in life these particles of matter of many sorts and workings in our body were *bound*, and that after our dying they become *unbound*, even in such a way that all the visible, there was to us, becomes *unbound*, i.e., dissolved.

That which held the body bound was the soul; what lets it loose is the soul at separation; and thus the unbinding which follows upon death, is the direct result of the separation between soul and body.

YET this is not the sense in which the apostle speaks of having “a desire to be *unbound*” (Phil. 1, 23, Dutch version). The unbinding which after death takes place in

the corpse, is something repulsive, something that offends and repels. While the *becoming unbound*, of which the apostle here speaks, is something *desirable*. Not yet desired therefore by every one. By far the most still shrink from the thought of being thus unbound. Even not all believers by far desire thus to be unbound. Yet there are those, to whom the thought of this unbinding has become a matter of desire. And when the apostle wrote to the church at Philippi, he took the lead in this of us all.

What unbinding then does this refer to?

And the answer is: Not the loosening of the body from the soul, but the loosening of the soul from the body.

It refers here to the same thing, which in Romans 7 the apostle expresses, by saying: Who shall deliver me, loosen me, unbind me from the body of this death?

The word itself, *unbound*, which is here used, is borrowed from what happens when one goes on a journey, when one departs, when one leaves the place where thus far he abode.

In the original language it is used of a *two-fold* departure: Of the going to sea on the part of the sailor, and of the pulling-up of the tent on a desert journey.

First the ship lay tied to the shore or at anchor. Thus with cable or chain it was *bound* to anchor or dolphin. And now, by drawing in the cable or lifting of the anchor, that tie is unloosed. So the ship becomes free. Now it is unbound. The journey begins.

Or, instead of a sea-voyage, one takes his course through a sand-sea, not in a ship, but in a tent. The tent stood by its straps bound to the pinnings. But now the

cords are unloosed. The pins are pulled up. The tent is folded and the camels are laden. The journey through the desert takes its start.

Two images, which portray our dying with wondrous beauty.

Yonder the haven of the eternal rest. Between us and that haven lies the ocean of eternity. And now at dying the bark of our life is unloosed, and the journey to the haven of eternal rest begins.

Or, we dwelt here in our tent. But now with dying a change steps in. The tent that lodged us is unloosed and broken up. Our soul is unbound. And set free from this earthly tabernacle, it begins its last day's journey, and enters into the fatherland.

YET, apart from this imagery, at the root of this *becoming unbound* there lies the thought, that our soul was bound to the body, and by the body to the earth, and that at dying this double band is broken, and the liberated soul receives wings, by which to lift itself up to the mountains of God's holiness.

What now is your thought of that boundeness of soul to body?

It has been represented, as though the soul were locked up in the body as in a prison. The body was then taken as something to be afraid of, as something apart, as something foreign to you, and the soul was imprisoned in it.

This, however, will not stand before God's Word.

In that case there could be no mention of a resurrection of the glorified body. He who has once escaped

from prison, will shun it. And a *glorified* prison is an idea that contradicts itself.

No, your body is not the prison, but the organ, the instrument, the vesture, the appearance-form of your soul in the visible and the external.

The body belongs with the soul. The soul is disposed to the possession of the body. To be outside of the body, is for the soul an unnatural condition. And though she can not prevent the separation, yet she dies in the hope of once again, and then on better conditions, to be reunited with her body.

The apostle even views it as a privilege for those, who shall live to see Jesus' return, that they shall be spared the separation from the body, and that, without this dreadful separation, their body shall at once be glorified.

Something like what happened on Tabor, when Jesus was glorified, and shone in heavenly splendor, without death having stepped in between.

The fact is, that by sin neither our soul nor our body is now, what they should be, and that consequently the relation also between soul and body has become perturbed.

This now cannot be restored, but soul and body must first be taken from one another.

Hence the separation, which enters in at death.

And hence he who is in the right attitude must have a desire after that separation.

For through that separation leads the way to reunion in glorious harmony.

BUT then our body also must be to us a copy of our soul in the visible. Every thought, every power, every operation, every purpose must then house in the soul, and from the soul seek to press to the outside. And our body must then offer our soul such an instrument, such an organ, such an organization, as she needs, to make these thoughts, these operations, these powers to come to the outside, to reach the by her intended goal.

The soul in the centers of our nervous-life must touch the nervous system. By means of the nervous system she must be able, to become aware of what goes on outside of her. And at the same time, through those nerves transfer her inner motion first to her body-sphere, and then to the outside of her.

So it is not our eye that sees, and not our ear that hears, but it is our soul that sees and hears, through the window of our eye and through the telephone of our ear.

When some one swoons, he is gone, and must be brought to again. But though he is gone from the observable world, he is still here. Only, at that moment his body does not serve him. He is not aware of anything around him, and can no more operate through his body. But that he continued to be here and still is, appears presently when he comes to again. Also, he revives with precisely the same soul, which is just what it was before, with the same remembrances, thoughts, representations, operations and powers.

Now at dying this "being gone" is not merely for a moment, but permanent, going on until the resurrection of the dead.

But essentially the matter is one and the same.

The body no longer performs its service. The body

is taken away from the soul. The soul now is without the body.

Nevertheless the soul remains the same with her consciousness, with her power of representation, with her inner driving and working and power.

Nothing has been taken away from the soul. In nothing has she been lessened. Only, she stands before a closed door. She can no more look into this visible world. She can no longer hear the sounds of this world. In this world she can no longer work or exercise power. The expression of her power in this world is prevented her.

If for becoming-aware or for self-expression in the Father-house above, a similar instrument were necessary, the soul in heaven would have no knowledge of anything, nor be able to express herself.

But such is not the case.

In the world of the heavens the soul takes *immediate* cognizance, and can *immediately* express herself, even as angels do this.

Hence in this new world she does not miss the body. She has no need of it. She is enough unto herself.

It is with this as with the eye and the glass. A captain at sea can not observe things in the far distance without his glass. Suppose his glass fell away, and his eye changed into an eagle's-eye, he would yet be able to observe just as accurately and just as far, but now without need of the instrument.

Lack, therefore, is not occasioned for the moment by being unbound from the body.

Only, the soul knows, that God has His visible world, and that man is disposed and created, in that world also to glorify his God.

And therefore, and for this alone, the soul in eternity yearns for the resurrection of the body.

Not from self-willed desire, but by virtue of the creation-ordinance of God.

“From the Body of This Death”

Do you believe in the *vicarious* character of the *passion and death* of Jesus?

Do you confess with deep thankfulness that the *suffering*, which in accordance with God's righteous judgment should have come to you, Jesus has borne for you, so that you did not suffer it, neither suffer it now, nor will suffer it eternally? And do you likewise confess, that *the death*, which you had deserved, was endured by Jesus *in your stead*, so that He died for you, and so died *the death* which *you* should have had to die?

If so, why then is it, that you also die? If the bailsman pays, he who obtained the bailsman (surety) does not pay. The selfsame punishment is not twice exacted. By nature and according to the creation-ordinance of God you would *not* have died, but without *death* and without *dying* you would have been changed into higher glory. Then because of and by sin death as punishment for that sin has come into the world. Thereby alone. Only as punishment. If then Jesus has borne for you that punishment of dying, that punishment of death—and you believe this—does it not follow from this that you are rid of death, that death has no more claim on you, and that, when death knocks at your door, you can turn him away by showing him your receipt, which shows that neither *suffering* nor *dying* are charged up against you any more, since *both* of these have been settled for you and in your stead by Jesus?

Death, indeed, according to Holy Scripture, has *not* been suffered by more than one of God’s saints. Of Enoch it is written, not that he died, as the other patriarchs, but that God took him, in consequence of which *he was not*. Of Elijah we read, that he went up in a fiery chariot with fiery horses. Jesus said to Peter regarding John: “If I *will*, that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” A saying, which at the same time implies the possibility of passing without dying into glory. And the apostle does not merely say most positively, that they, who confess Jesus in the hour of His return, shall not die, but be *changed*, but at the same time makes it clearly evident, that he would have thought it, O, so glorious, if that high privilege had been accorded him.

After the vicarious dying of Jesus it would have to be so; from what we quoted, appears that it *can*. And so the question of the Heidelberg is not to be evaded: Since then Christ died for us, why must we also die? And ever yet there is no better answer given than what the Heidelberg gives: Our death is not a satisfaction for our sins, but only an *abolishing of sin*, and a *passage into eternal life*.

FROM this it is clearly evident, that he who falls asleep in his Lord and Savior, does not “die the death” in the sense of Gen. 2, 17, neither dies the death such as Jesus died it upon Golgotha, yea, he does not die like those who die *outside* of Jesus.

In Gen. 2, 17 death is threatened as a punishment, as the real satisfaction for sin. On Golgotha Jesus dies

the death as *punishment*, and thus at the same time as the satisfaction for sin. And whoever dies outside of Jesus, still undergoes death as punishment, and therefore as a satisfaction for his own sin.

In the same hospital ward two patients may die at the same moment, and the dying of one be *something altogether different* from the dying of the other.

For the one his punishment, that dreadful satisfaction for his own sin, which now makes a beginning; and for the other a glorious grace of God and his entrance upon eternal life.

This may *seem* to be the same, but it *is* not the same.

They both pass through the same gate, but scarcely have they passed the gate, but beyond it the two ways run altogether apart. The one goes *below* into the eternal death, and the just man goes the other way *above*, to the holy Zion of God.

And that we are so frequently mistaken in this, is, because we look upon the "giving up of the ghost" as the real dying, as the real death.

Real death only begins *after* dying. With dying death is not ended, but giving up of the spirit is to the lost but the first step, which he takes on the path of eternal death. Beyond the gate of dying death spreads itself out endlessly in the eternal depth.

And therefore the difference is no less than this, that he who falls asleep in his Lord and Savior, truly passes through the gate of dying, *but never enters into death*, while he who dies outside of Jesus at once after dying sinks away along the steep path of death, forever to remain a prey of death, and without ever being able to escape from the bands of death.

That Jesus unloosed those bands of eternal death, we owe to His Divine nature. But whoever is man, and only man, can, once sunken away in death, never more escape from death.

Hence the redeemed of the Lord truly die, but without ever for one moment coming under the power of death.

So when they die, they do not go leftward into the depth of death, but rightward up the high path of life.

Giving up the ghost, breathing out the last breath, is for them nothing but passing through the gate, which from this world leads to the world which is with God, and thus for him who dies in Jesus, nothing but a *passage into eternal life*.

You should never therefore compare the dying of Jesus with *your* own dying.

For Jesus dying was equally as terrible as it is glorious for you.

Once he had passed through the gate, Jesus had to take the downward path on the left, into the depth of eternal death.

Had Jesus' dying been nothing else than your dying, His soul would not have trembled, as in Gethsemane, but far more glorious still than the most beloved child of God on earth, rejoicing and jubilating, He would have gone to die.

The way of suffering would not have been to Him a way of blood and tears, but one of triumph. A going away from this world to the world above. An escape

from the oppression of this life, to enter upon the liberty and glory of God's children.

But it was not thus for Jesus.

Jesus did not merely *die*, but He died the *death*. As it reads in Gen. 2, 17: thou shalt *die the death* (Dutch version, or "dying thou shalt die"), is what has come upon your Savior. He did not merely give up the ghost, but He underwent the *punishment of death*, that that punishment of death might never more come upon you.

He did not by way of dying enter into heaven, but after dying, He descended into the depth of eternal death. And only after having sunken away in the depth of eternal death, thanks to the invincible power of His Divine nature, He ascended again, and entered into Paradise, from Paradise, after His resurrection, to return to this world again, and only after forty days from the mount of Olives to go into heaven.

THAT nevertheless for us the passage to eternal life goes through the gate of death, is only explained from the fact, that we are no independent individuals, but are related to the whole human race.

Only when the human race shall come to an end, and Jesus comes again, will that gate be avoidable. Then without dying God's saints will go into eternity.

But so long as the human race in its entirety is not yet born in all its generations, and new generations must yet come, history on earth goes on, life here on earth is not yet ended, and thus whoever shall enter

into eternal life, must be led out from this life, be altogether separated from the living, for a time say farewell to this world, and to this end shake off his body, that now, delivered from the body of this death, provisionally, and in expectation of what is to come afterward, he may enter heaven.

Otherwise he should have to remain upon earth, and wait till the last child on earth had been born, and history came to an end.

He should have to remain here on earth all the time until the coming again of the Lord.

This the Lord spares His saints.

He knows, that this endless permanence here on earth, would become an unbearable burden to them.

He knows that here on earth His saints are still vexed by all sorts of sin and misery. And that in the soul they are homesick, to be delivered from this less-holy state.

He hears the deep call, which now and then ascends from the soul of every believer: "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death" (Rom. 7, 24).

And therefore He calls them off. Therefore He makes an end to this condition. Therefore He does *not* let them wait, but lets them already now enter into His heaven, that there, far more glorious than on earth, they can await the return of the Lord.

And though this goes through dying, He makes their dying easy, He safeguards them against every contact with real death, and His angels await them on the other side of the gate, to carry them into the Father-house.

For this reason for believers such dying has become *a grace*.

A grace, for which already here on earth they call upon God. And very certainly a grace, for which, as they enter heaven, they offer Him ardent thanks.

“*Wipe Away Tears*”

IN the land chosen of God for His holy Revelation, there did not live the kind of people to which we Westerners belong.

In the East man is of another existence of soul. This depends upon climate, environment, descent and national past. All these data combined brought to pass, that in the East cold phlegmatism was far less common, and readily excited feeling far more strongly dominant, by reason of which their emotional life was far more vehement.

Jews, that live among us, are naturally for no small part Western tempered. And yet, though they have long not been what once they were in the East, there is still enough opportunity to observe, how much more rapid they often are of speech, how much more mercurial their gesticulations, how much stronger the distortions of their face, and how much more violently their feelings can surge.

In reading Holy Scripture this must needs be noted. Otherwise our eye no longer sees the just proportions. And if we take these “passionate expressions,” uninterpreted upon our lips, our speech does not harmonize with our inner life, and in the bypaths of our piety truth stumbles. Think of the expression: *I am poured out like water*, and ask yourself what labored fancies have been drawn from it.

This in general applies also to *weeping*. Soul-utter-

ances, such as: "I water my couch with my tears" (Ps. 6, 6), "All the night I make my bed to swim," are not applicable to people like ourselves. "Oh, that my head were waters, that I might weep for the slain of my people" (Jer. 9, 1), is stronger in its expression than this of itself would be with us. That there is "sowing done with tears" is in that literal sense scarcely thinkable among us. "To cover the altar of the Lord with tears," betrays a passion in holy things most foreign to us.

In the East, on the other hand, and with Israel all this literally took place, and the truth of Scripture expresses itself in this, that it employs no bombastic imagery, but by the description of more violent stirrings of emotion than we are accustomed to, lays bare the inner organization of our human nature.

To *laugh*, not with the foolish, neither the ceaseless laugh of the insane, but the laugh of sinless and holy joy, belongs to our nature. This is evident from the fact, that of God Himself it is written: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." But *weeping* is an utterance of our nature, which is only explicable in a world of sin. Of Jesus it is written, that amidst our misery He wept. Of God this is never told.

IN the tear you can see as well an utterance of the curse, as a fruit of common grace. It is an utterance of the curse, for so far as it is a cry of anguish. It is fruit of Common Grace, for so far as in this the overburdened heart relieves itself.

But whatever way you take it, “weeping” is always evidence, that misery went through the soul, or that misery surrounds you. For though there is also a “weeping because of joy,” yet this is merely the result of too violent a stirring of emotion, over which we have no control. So there is also laughter of anguish, and laughter of the insane.

Taken normally on the other hand, *laughter* goes with joy, *tears* with misery. Misery, which can be purely *external*, as when a child cries bitterly, because some toy is taken from him by a playmate. Also a misery which penetrates to *bone and marrow*, at which the whole heart is aghast, and which in anguish of soul makes us pine away before God. But always utterance of an anxious perception which troubles and oppresses us, and from which we seek to escape; which from the depths of our heart works up to the eye, and breaks in the moistened eye, till the tear-pearl has formed itself, and trickles down our cheek.

When we are grown, we ourselves wipe that tear away. Sometimes we are ashamed, that another should see the tear in our eye.

But a child lets its tears flow. And then comes mother and wipes the tears away from the child’s face. She does this with care, till the last tear is removed, and the child’s trouble is forgotten, and no more tear forms itself.

And so it is written of God the Lord, that He also will dry the moist eye of His children, and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (Rev. 21, 4).

Thus a representation, as though His redeemed children shall arrive at the gate of the Father-house with tears in the eyes, and as though the Father in heaven

stands ready, before they enter into glory, to make those signs of their past sorrows disappear.

In God's Father-house God's saints laugh, but they weep there no more.

To be in God's blessed heaven, and still weep on account of grief, would clash.

THAT this is imagery, needs scarcely be said.

He who was called to eternal life, has shaken off the earthly tabernacle, the mortality of the body has with him been swallowed up of life, and he who parted from the body, and drew his soul away from before his eyes, can through these abandoned eyes no longer weep.

But he who understands that not the *ear* hears, but the *soul* through the ear, will also understand, that not the *eye* weeps, but the *soul* through the eye.

Not the body suffers pain, but the soul through the body. Therefore even stupefaction renders us insensible at an operation. When, be it only temporarily, the soul is isolated from the body (and that is stupefaction) there is no pain and no suffering.

Though he who died, in dying, took off the garment of the body, the soul, therefore, can yet suffer pain, and without the eye the soul can inwardly weep.

You hardly dare think it, and yet it is true, that the soul that dies outside of Jesus, only after dying begins really to feel pain. Did not, with respect to the lost, Jesus say that with them there would be weeping, yea, gnashing of teeth?

It is by no means true, therefore, that dying as

such and by itself makes an end to suffering, to pain, and to weeping.

On the contrary, by very dying pain, suffering becomes far more dreadful, and then only begins by itself the weeping of soul.

And that with those who die in Jesus this is *not* so, does not come of itself, but is fruit of an act of Grace on the part of God. Result of this, that after their dying, from the soul's-eye of all His dear children, God wipes away the tear.

How is this to be understood?

A three-fold act of God is here to be distinguished: He translates from misery into joy. He spreads forgetfulness upon remembrance. He cuts sin, the source of our sole misery, off from the soul.

Consider each of these separately.

There is a part of our misery, that comes from our dwelling in this sinful and imperfect world. In that world was our part. In that world we cherished all sorts of expectation. And therefore that world brought us every time again trouble and disappointment.

Well, with the separation from the body the Lord liberates the elect soul from that part of misery. There is no more sickness and no more bodily pain. There is no more cold and bleakness, which cuts and creates anxiety. There is no more care for our daily bread. There are no more people to harass us. There is no more slander that follows us after. There is no more disappointment in daily tasks and business. There are no more unrighteousnesses that try us all the day.

All this falls away, and the tear, that was wept on account of all this, of itself dries up.

Though this is not enough.

Our soul not merely wants no more sorrow *negatively*, but also *positive* joy. After joy and glory she is inwardly homesick. And so long as that homesickness remains unsatisfied, she weeps in herself.

But now comes the Lord, and leads the soul, which He called, into the joy of the Father-house. And now, enjoying what no ear had heard, no eye had seen, and what had entered into no human heart, she laughs from joy, and of itself every tear congeals.

THIS is the first, but by no means all.

If after dying the memories which we carry with us, were retained, suffering, at least in part, would accompany us into eternity.

A mother, herself blessed, who carried sorrow of soul regarding her child still unconverted with her into eternity, would never be able to enjoy blessedness in its fullness.

Also the loss of what the soul left behind upon earth, the uncertainty of what will become of her own, thinking back of the sometimes so painful circumstances of those who are still on earth, would for no small part gall the eternal joy.

Something especially evident when one considers, how much finer and tenderer the feeling of the liberated soul in eternal life must be.

That this vexation pursues the lost in eternity, you see in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. Does

he not ask, that some one might be sent to warn his brethren, lest they too might come into the place of torment? True, this is figurative language, but to those who are lost there is something terrible in it.

Wiping away of tears, therefore, from the eyes of the elect is connected with a special act of God's grace, even in this, that He puts forgetfulness of the past over the soul, just as stupefaction by means of anæsthesia puts forgetfulness over the soul regarding the actions of the surgeon during the operation upon the body.

The discharged soul becomes isolated from the life, which she left behind.

How this forgetfulness is put upon the soul, is a question that demands a special answer.

Suffice it now to indicate, that, if she retained her memories and was still cognizant of all the suffering on earth, the soul would continue to weep. Something from which follows, that the wiping away of all tears by God, also includes this act of grace of forgetfulness.

THE third or last point touches the soul herself.

He who lives deeply knows very well, that sorrow regarding ourselves is the most cutting sorrow. That endless unsatisfiedness. That sin of the past that calls after us. Those unholinesses, which still continually well up from this our sinful heart, and estrange us from our God.

This is a sorrow, which we do not always feel on earth, but most sharply and most comprehensibly in our holiest moments. Thus it is evident of itself, that,

after dying, the soul would be overpowered by this sorrow the most, and by reason of it would weep most bitterly, since in the presence of the holy the feeling speaks so much stronger.

Yet those tears also the Lord wipes away from the face of His dear children; and that expresses itself in two ways.

First by perfecting the faith in the peace through the blood of the cross—a faith which here on earth so often languishes—so that the soul has nothing more to do with former sin, and sees, that God has cast it *into the depth of the sea*.

And on the other hand by cutting off the soul itself from sin and by the act of grace of the dying itself, to bring her to *complete* sanctification.

And that provides holiest joy.

Only when God wipes away *that* tear also, the soul laughs with a joy that enraptures her altogether.

“That as He Is So Also Are We”

YOUR dying in death, if you die in Jesus, will be for you a “dying unto sin.” How this is possible, and how this shall proceed, is a mystery, which never discloses itself to you altogether. But that it is so, you believe. You believe it on the ground of God’s Word. You believe it because in heaven a sinful life is unthinkable. And you believe it so willingly and so eagerly, because it is so appealing a thought to you, so intimately-rich and inwardly enrapturing, of once never, never more to sin, not even with the faintest desire of your heart.

That “dying unto sin” will not consist of your departure from your flesh. When your flesh doeth evil, it is your soul, your self, it is *you*, who employ your flesh to sin, and Satan, who never was clothed in a body of flesh, is the dreadful “father of all sinners” who has generated all sins from pure spirit.

That “dying unto sin” must therefore be something else. It is not something which you will do yourself, in your last hour, by cursing the world, making holy resolutions and making solemn vows. It is equally little something that your loved ones do, who surround your deathbed. It must be something that in dying God works in you, hence that dying unto sin can be no other than the perfecting of your sanctification. To this we add, that it must be something, that takes place at once. For so long as you are still conscious and have breath to speak, prayer for *grace* continues; something

that after dying unto sin would have no more sense. Also in many cases death is as a bolt of lightning that strikes, by murder or a stroke. And on the other hand the moment breath is gone, the dying unto sin must be perfected. For here we speak of one who goes to heaven, and as sinner, no one enters there.

Also this.

Among the elect who die, there is great difference. One dies aged and full of days with a sinful life before conversion, and many sins in his life after his conversion, behind him. A second goes into eternity, just when the world was about to disclose itself to him, and he was ready for the world. A third dies as young man or maiden. A fourth still younger. And finally there are those, which already in the cradle close their little eyes for good, or which died before they ever reached the cradle.

All this makes a difference, great difference. With the one consciousness of sin, knowledge of sin, bitter memories of sin; with the other no single sin sinned and no sin ever known.

And though thereby "dying unto sin" may differ in form with the one and the other, fundamentally it must be the same with all.

The same with the floweret of a day and with the old man of eighty and more years.

So taken, dying unto sin cannot be anything else, than that by death *you are loosed from the band of this world.*

Think of what Scripture says of a *regenerated per-*

son. Such a person received in himself "the seed of God." That seed of God was and remains in him, and can never be removed from him. And by reason of that seed that is in him he can never sin again. Or think of what Paul testified regarding himself. He himself did no more wrong, but sin that as a stranger still dwelt in him. Noteworthy in this connection is what Jesus said to His disciples: "Now *are* ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you (John 15, 2), and he who is clean, has no more need to be washed, save only his *feet*, whereby he walks about in the world and takes up of the dust of the world."

The antinomian abuses this, by committing more sin, and God shall judge him. But he who takes this in the sacred sense, confesses herein, that he himself, from himself *can* no more sin and that thus sin which every time again enchants him, and which equally often he mourns, is every time a foreign something that as a parasitic plant winds itself around his soul, and thus does not have its root in his heart, but in the world.

You know indeed what "sanctification" is.

Not first to become two tenths clean, then three tenths and four tenths, and so on. For, the seed of God that is implanted in you by regeneration is absolutely clean, there never was sin in it, and sin can never mingle itself in it.

Sanctification can never be otherwise than two-fold: first germination of the seed of God, and secondly loosening of what springs up from the seed of God out of the entwining of the parasitic plant of sin, which from the world winds itself around you.

Now that germination of the seed of God is surely

not the dying unto sin, for only in eternity does that germination go through in full.

Hence it must indeed be the being pulled loose from the entwining of the parasitic plant, wherewith the world held you enwound.

A taking away with one wrench of that evil parasitic plant, which fed on the life of your soul.

WHAT now is that parasitic plant?

Consider carefully, that with the infant and with the man of years it must be one and the selfsame thing. With the man of years it may be broader ramified, may have run up higher, but with both it must be one and the same *in sort*.

Is now that parasitic plant something, that on a certain day came upon you, and which was not with you at first?

Surely not.

With that parasitic plant around you you were born. In the entwining of that parasitic plant you were conceived. That parasitic plant awaited you before you came to exist. And that parasitic plant will remain rampant, when you shall be no more.

That parasitic plant was not in Adam when God created him, but the seed of that parasitic plant was sown in Adam by Satan. By Adam's unbelief and unfaithfulness it is come to germination. From him it has with ever broader ramification extended itself in all mankind. And now it is inwoven in that race, in our world, in society, in human customs, in our human consciousness, in everything. In everything that constitutes

circles of human life and unites people in one association or in one race.

By reason of this, Jesus alone excepted, every child born of a woman, is born in the branches and twigs of this parasitic plant; and that, when a man is regenerated, this parasitic plant continues to entwine him. It also produces seed, and that seed in every human heart, makes new shoots to lift up their heads. The difference is, that with regeneration that seed of the parasitic plant goes out *from the heart*, to give place to the seed of God. But the branches and twigs of the parasitic plant continue to entwine him. And sanctification is, that already in this life God gives the pruning-knife into our hands, somewhat to liberate ourselves, and to cut away from around us the troublesome twigs, which vex us most. So we get air. And God gives us His church, the fellowship of saints, wherein still more room is made, and in which the branches and twigs of the parasitic plant, have by no means that vexing, stifling power over us.

But we remain, until our death, entangled in that evil snare.

And in our death the deliverance is, that God lifts our whole being out of this snarled ramification of the parasitic plant, liberates us altogether from it, and brings it to pass, that no single branch or twig or thorn of that parasitic plant can any more touch us.

This goes through even in our consciousness, for in dying God also cuts off the remembrance of our sins.

Then they sink away as in the depth of the sea, in which no one (including yourself) can find them.

YET this "dying unto sin" has also its *positive* side.

You have come up from the world. You belonged with that world. As a child of man you were member of one great human race. You did not stand by yourself. You existed and lived in relation to that race, to that world, to her life. That was your fellowship, the world in which you were at home, the great body of which you were a small member. And into that world-relation, which enwound you, sneaked that parasitic plant, that sometimes vexed you unto death.

Good. From that world, from that fellowship, from this relation in dying you are set free.

But now without relation you can not by yourself alone drift upon yourself.

You truly belong to a race, you must stand in a fellowship, you must live in a relation. To be member of a body, is the ordinance of your creation.

And see, in dying it comes to pass, not only that the parasitic plant passes away, and you are lifted out from the relation of that old sinful world; but you are simultaneously transposed into another generation, in another world, into another relation; you become member of another body, and that is called the body of the Son of God, the new, the redeemed humanity, the assembly of just men made perfect.

The beginning of this was enjoyed already here in the fellowship of saints. But, O, on so small a scale. In so narrow a circle. And over against this there always stood the mighty fellowship of the old sinful world, and pressed in upon it.

And the grace God shows you in dying, is first, indeed, that He lifts you out for good from that sinful relation of that old world. But also that He inweaves

you into the full fellowship of that new humanity, into that holy world-relation of Christ, so that after dying your world round about you no longer goes in against the seed of God in your heart, but harmonizes in full with the new life of childship in you, makes it germinate the more richly, and sustains it.

“To Eat of the Tree of Life”

OF the seven promises, which in the battle for God and His Christ must stimulate, spur on and inspire the victor, the first is, that he that overcometh *shall eat of the Tree of life*.

It was eating of the Tree of life, whereby our break with Paradise became accomplished fact.

Though the language, which in Genesis narrates that break with Paradise, be ever so mysterious, it states with utter clearness, that after man's break with *his God*, the break with *his Paradise* was bound to follow. This was necessary for the reason, that he who remained in Paradise would be free to partake of the Tree of life, and because the mere thought, that a creature fallen away from God should eat of the Tree of life, would have been horrible and monstrous.

To prevent this horror, they who had risen in revolt against their God had at once to be removed from the garden of Eden, and immediately afterward a watch of heavenly Cherubim placed itself between them and their lost Paradise. Cherubim, who turned the loveliness of their heavenly appearance toward the inside of Paradise, and sent out toward the curse-laden earth, and toward man who had brought that curse upon it, their flaming terrifying glint and gleam. Those same angels, who at other times minister salvation to God's humanity, here stand between man and eternal life. They shut off Paradise from him and with it the entrance of

God's blessed heaven. So here is the starting-point of all the misery, that has pursued the sinner.

We feel the misery, because we have the remembrance of Paradise. It is the homesickness after that forfeited and lost Paradise, that in all forms rasps the soul. The stronger that homesickness after the Paradise that is gone from us wakens in our soul, the deeper the lancet of misery enters into our soul. For this reason the suffering of the saints moved them so much more deeply, than the "people who are of the world," that God's prophets were moved by it yet more violently than the rank and file of worshipers of His holy Name, and, above all that no one has succumbed more entirely under this suffering, than the Son of man, when in Gethsemane His soul became troubled even unto death, He Who alone among all bore the full, clear consciousness of that Paradise in His heart.

And the first word, that the exalted King of God's kingdom, on Patmos speaks to His confidant, is, that for him who overcometh, that break with Paradise shall be brought to nought; that the same Cherubim, who drove Adam and Eve out from Paradise, and kept them out, shall escort His blessed ones back to it again, and that to them the right and the power shall be restored, to eat again of the Tree of Life. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Rev. 2, 7).

THIS, then, is the first, the most glorious of what is accorded them who die in Christ. Here is the key-note of the salvation, that is appointed them. What was lost, comes back. The Paradise of God is restored to them.

To receive a *new good*, is less wonderful than to see a good that was lost given back to you again.

Only think of Jesus' touching parables of the lost sheep, and of the lost penny.

When the *lost penny* is found again, she who lost the same, says Jesus, calls her neighbors together, to rejoice with her. When the *lost sheep* is traced, the faithful shepherd puts it upon his shoulder, *being glad*, and coming home he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying unto them: "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost." And when the *prodigal son* is found again, the happy father says in his delight: "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this my son was dead, and is alive again." In keeping with this Jesus' entire appearance is a seeking of what had drifted off, a finding again of what was lost.

And in this connection is also His first promise, His first word to His saints, that he that overcometh shall not be brought into a state of happiness that is foreign to him, but that the homesickness in his heart obtains eternal satisfaction and that he returns to the Paradise once lost.

Into that same Paradise of his God, from which once the angels of God drove him forth, he, after having overcome, is again ushered in. Ushered in to the center, to the middle of the garden, to where the central point of all Paradise-glory is, close to the Tree of Life, that he might eat thereof, and live forever.

THE look of him who dies, is therefore not directed to a foreign, to him a mysterious future, which does not speak to him, but *to the past*, to what slipped away from him, to what he lost and sinned away.

Jesus in our dying calls us back to the riches of God's almighty lovingkindness in our creation.

Our state of sin and misery becomes a middle-act, but back of it is God, and His almightiness, and His wondrous creation, when the sons of God rejoiced and the morning stars sang together. When God created man after His image, pure, holy and glorious, and when for man, created after His image, God had prepared Paradise, baptized in a wealth of blessedness, of which in the homesickness of our heart the memory lives on, and in which the goodness of God had glorified itself.

Now all this was gone. To our sense it was all brought to nought. It was, as though it no longer existed. And as though there must be built for us something new, if there would ever be again an habitation, to occupy with gladness of heart.

But so Jesus does not understand it.

No, thrice no, He says to all His saints. That Paradise is *not* gone, it was only lost. And that lost Paradise returns. What was lost I have found back, even as God has kept it for you.

And this will make your eternal joy so rich, so abounding, so overwhelming, that after dying in the halls of unfading light you will call together your friends and neighbors, saying, rejoice with me, for this my Paradise was lost, and is found again. God has kept it for me.

THE Tree of Life in Paradise must remain a mystery, because it contains so flourishing a fruit: the power of eternal life.

Something of this can be understood, when one considers, how the hidden power of the soul comes out the more readily and undisturbedly and proves effective, the more readily the body places itself at the service of the soul, and in nothing resists or impedes her. And so it is thinkable that the fruit of the Tree of Life was able, to impart such a perfect disposition to the body, that it lost all urge of its own, and *altogether became the vehicle of the soul*.

There can be no spiritual power by itself in a plant, even in no elect plant of Paradise. Matter only operates directly upon matter, and thus upon our body. But thereby the relation, in which the body stands to the soul, can be dominated. The body can detain the soul, oppose her, disturb her, but, provided it operates altogether harmoniously, it can also serve the soul, in all things serve her, and be at her beck and nod. In the end be nothing but her harmonious instrument. And the wondrous power to realize this can have been put of God in the fruit of the Tree of Life.

In that case it becomes at the same time clear, how after the fall man could still have eaten of the Tree of Life, and how then his body would have become an instrument of his *evil* soul ready in all things to serve her. How the horribleness and the monstrosity consisted in this, which had to be averted. And how therefore in the state of sin every approach to the Tree of Life had to be cut off.

But though this gives light, a mystery still remains.

The real nature and working of the Tree of Life remains to us a mystery.

A MYSTERY likewise the being in Paradise immediately after our dying.

By itself the realm of glory tarries to disclose itself, till Jesus returns. The new heaven only comes, when the new earth shall come.

Yet from His Cross we hear Jesus say to His fellow-crossling: “This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” Something that is the more conclusive, since from the mount of Olives Jesus ascended bodily, and thus also now still is *in His glorified body* with God.

Yet Jesus says, that before His resurrection, and thus incorporeally, in His separated soul He would be in Paradise. And so also the man, who in his dying on Golgotha was declared blessed.

Though it is perfectly clear, therefore, that our dead, who die in the Lord, shall only in the resurrection be clothed with their body, yet they are already now in Paradise, and in that Paradise they already have rejoicing.

And if you ask, whether that “eating of the Tree of Life” does not come only afterward, it would be mocking with all reality, to doubt this.

And yet this glorious promise of Jesus has also for them already significance.

Or do you not understand, how they who here on earth have known all the struggle of the flesh, and now at last, are liberated from the body of this death, would almost with fearsome anxiety anticipate the moment,

when this shackling of the body shall return, and would almost pray against the return in the body.

Well, for this reason this glorious promise comforts also them.

That return in the body shall never occasion them distress again for the soul. For, you shall eat of the Tree of Life. And that fruit of the Tree of Life shall be a guarantee unto you, that the body which you obtain back again, shall never be otherwise than in perfect harmony the ready and willing instrument, eternally with soul and body both to glorify your Father, Who is in heaven.

XVIII

"Not Hurt of the Second Death"

ALSO the epistle to Smyrna's church touches all churches, and in every church each child of God; every soul, that died in blessedness, standing in living fellowship with the Savior.

Struggle here, too, is the starting-point. With nerveless peace there is no advance. Here, too, it must be a wrestling as with fears of death. But when you overcome therein, then who has ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: He that overcometh, *shall not be hurt of the second death* (Rev. 2, 11).

Thus there is a *second* death, which comes after the *first* death. And what makes the hero and the heroine is: to look beyond the first death to the second death, and to know assuredly that one also passes through the second death unhurt.

The first and second death have each their own proportions. They are not two similar deaths. These two deaths are not alike; not of like tendency; not of like terror; not of like deathly oppression.

On the contrary, they diverge so far apart and are so utterly *unlike* one another, that he who in Jesus has deeply and seriously grasped the nature of the second death, scarcely sees in the first any more a Death at all, and almost derides that first death, saying: Death, dead Death, where is thy blunted sting!

Then you experience what Jesus said you would experience, when He said: "Fear not the tyrant who

can kill your body, but rather fear Him, Who is able to destroy both your soul and your body in hell" (Matt. 10, 28).

For this are these *two* deaths. A form of representation, which is borrowed directly from Jesus' own preaching. There is the *first* death, when on the deathbed or scaffold the soul is separated from your body. And there is a *second* death, when the obdurate and hardened sinner, finally, after the resurrection of the flesh, with soul and body becomes a prey to that bitter destruction, which Jesus Himself portrayed as a fire, that is never extinguished and as a worm in the heart, which never dies. "There," as Jesus declared, "shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Altogether in agreement with this you read in Revelation 21, 8, that "*the fearful*," they who from fear of the world deny their Savior; that "*the unbelievers*," they who did not convert themselves; and that "*the abominable*," they who are the reprobates who commit murder and adultery, who lie and deceive, will altogether have their part not in Paradise, but in the *lake*: that this lake burns with fire and brimstone, not merely with fire, but also with brimstone, to express the deadly stifling of the same, and then follows: *and this is the second death*.

And the promise to Smyrna's church and to all churches and to every soul in Christ in those churches (for it reads: let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the *churches*) is, that a soul that overcame, shall not even be *hurt* by the second death.

That he shall not become a prey of the second death, is self-evident. That did not need to be demonstrated. But there is written something altogether differ-

ent: No hair of them shall be injured. No seam of their garment shall be singed. This second death shall not even graze them, nor approach them astride.

THERE is among people in spiritual sense, the *individual* and the *community*, and herein lies the difference between the first and the second death. You are *something apart*, a man by yourself, a proper person, an individual, and as such you die away from this world by *the first death*.

But you are also a man among men; a member of humanity; a leaf on the tree of your race, a part of the whole, living in a human fellowship. And upon this human fellowship comes *the second death*.

The difference becomes evident.

As individual, as man apart every one dies in his turn, every one on his own occasion. The one in another hour from the other. Every one in his time.

But the second death comes upon all who shall succumb under it at once, at the same time: in one selfsame moment; altogether; upon all in common in one dreadful hour.

The first death is before the judgment; to the second death the judgment precedes; and only when the judgment shall have been consummated, does the second death obtain power.

In the first death soul and body are torn asunder; in the second death soul and body are reunited, and corruption comes upon both.

There is indeed also an individual judgment, beat upon beat in the conscience after every sin, which af-

fectured one more strongly; and there is also an individual judgment for every one, who in clear consciousness, knowing that he is dying, goes into death. Yet, this is not *the* judgment.

The judgment comes upon all together, upon the race, upon the fellowship. So there is twofold birth and origin, the first when God created and formed Adam. That was the birth of your race. The life given to humanity. And there is the second birth when God formed you in your mother's womb. The life of your person; the rise of your *ego*.

Hence our twofold sin.

The sin in which we stand together before God, what humanity made itself bold to undertake against God. And alongside of this, yet rooting in this, the sin consciously committed by our *ego*.

And therefore over against this twofold born life, and over against this twofold sin, there stands also twofold death. Forsooth in reversed order. In advance the first death, when our *ego*, our person departs from this life. And after that, presently, the second death, which comes upon all together, upon the fellowship, upon what sprang *from* and remained of one mind *with* the fallen ancestor of the whole race.

OVER against this stands the twofold deliverance, the twofold redemption, the twofold reconciliation.

"Christ is a propitiation, not alone for our (personal) sin, but also for the sin of *the whole world*," says the holy apostle John (1, 2, 2). Thus Reconciler of the sin which the oneling, which the individual committed,

and of the sin which the community, which the race, which humanity, which the whole world together sinned.

Therefore there is also twofold *regeneration*.

First the regeneration of the individual, of the person, of yourself as oneling and as a being standing by yourself, that you were a child of the world, and now became a child of God.

But alongside of this there is also the regeneration of your race; the rise of a new fellowship; and that is the *body of Christ*, the assembly of the just made perfect, the new humanity under Christ as Head.

Now for a time there is in you the new *man*, the whiles the old man still works his aftermath. And so for a time there is the new *humanity* in Christ, the whiles the old fellowship on earth still works its aftermath.

And only death makes an end of this.

By the first death, in your personal dying, you die unto the old man of sin; and as a sanctified child of God you enter upon eternity.

And by the second death the new humanity is blessed and the unsaved go forever into perdition.

AND so you understand Jesus' promise to Smyrna's church, and in her to every soul that overcomes.

There would be no struggle and no battle, and thus also no overcoming, if the new man in you by regeneration were at once done with the old man. Only because such is not the case, the struggle ensues; and as reborn Christian, you must *overcome* what of the old man remained in you.

And so likewise there would externally be no struggle, if already here on earth the body of Christ were gathered apart and stood outside of the world. But such is not the case. The body of Christ on earth remains in fellowship with the unregenerated world. Hence they who are of the world do battle against everything that is of Christ. Thus Christianity must do battle against the old association. The new race against the old. And also in this struggle God's child must *overcome*.

Thus he that *overcometh* means: he who by his new man overcame the old man in his heart, and, together with Christendom, laid low the old world in the life of nation and society.

He who has thus struggled and thus overcome, when it comes to an end with him, faces these two deaths. The death of the individual and the death of the fellowship. The first and the second death.

Jesus turns this first dying for him into a "dying unto sin and into an entering upon eternal life." But thus having died and having entered upon eternal life is as yet only his provisional blessedness. Also when they who have fallen asleep rejoice before the throne, they always yet await the decisive moment at which Christ shall return to this world, the judgment shall follow, the second death shall enter in, and the realm of glory shall unfold itself in its full splendor.

Thus they stand not merely facing yet Jesus' return and coming glory, but also awaiting the judgment and the *second* death. That is to say the death of their race, the death of the old world. Of that race, of that world, of that fellowship, to which they themselves have belonged.

This does not go on outside of them.

Does not Scripture say distinctly, that the blessed also shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ? Not in any terror of the judgment, it is true. Rather to receive the crown. But yet they come in touch with it.

And then they shall see the second death approach and come upon the fearful, the unbelievers, the abominable, upon the world, to which they themselves once belonged, in which they have sinned and lived along with the rest.

And with respect to this, Jesus removes from His believers, who died in Him, every uncertainty, every anxiety and all terror.

“Thou shalt see the reward of the wicked, but it shall not come nigh thee.”

When before your eyes the second death shall come upon your old world, that second death shall not even from afar off harm you. He not only shall not drag you away as prey, but shall not even *hurt* you.

“The Hidden Manna”

ALSO “the hidden Manna” is promised, not in this, but in the life *to come*. Also this “hidden Manna” he who has found in Christ his Mediator, receives *only after death*.

So it appeared with respect to the eating of the *Tree of Life*. This could not be otherwise in connection with the “*not being hurt of the second Death*.” This was equally clear with the *white stone*. And the same applies also altogether to the Manna that is hidden. Here, too, it says, that only he, *who overcame*, shall receive that Manna from Christ. And of course this: *He that overcometh* shall then only be applicable to you, when the last battle shall have been fought and the crown of life shall be handed you by the righteous judge.

All spiritualizing of this promise must be resisted. Jesus truly calls Himself: “The true bread that is come down from heaven,” and by reason of this a certain pointing forward to Christ can not be withheld from the Manna in the wilderness, and also the Lord’s Supper can be put in relation with the word of our text. But yet, the “hidden Manna” here is not Christ, for Christ Himself declares, that *He* shall distribute it. Moreover, this did not need to be promised. That the Redeemed above enjoy inwardly and outwardly, speaks for itself. No one indeed could even think this otherwise. There would be no special promise in this. And also, in heaven Christ is in no case a *hidden Manna*. There He shines out in glory.

On Patmos the glorified Christ sheds a light for us upon the church militant and triumphant. Suffering and struggle here, and after that the victory. But that struggle and that victory do not refer here in the first place to the *individual* believer, not in the main to his *personal* suffering, and do not refer to his condition immediately after death. All this is inwoven, but is not the real material of the revelation here given by Christ. That real revelation refers to *the church as a whole*, to her career, to her struggle in the course of centuries, till the last struggle comes. And the triumph here delineated does not follow immediately after your death, but with and after the last judgment, when the new Jersalem shall come down from heaven and the *Kingdom of Glory* is ushered in.

All that here is said of those who fall asleep in Jesus, refers therefore not to the middle-state, in which after dying they exist only after the soul, but to their condition after the resurrection of the flesh, when they will again be soul *and body*, and that body *glorified*.

And with respect to that new condition they here receive from Jesus this promise also, that He will give them to eat of *the hidden Manna* (Rev. 2, 17).

THIS points back to Israel and to Christ in the wilderness.

Altogether wondrous was Israel's condition in the desert wilderness. There was a stop put to the process of destruction, which at other times makes clothes and shoes wear out. There was also a maintenance of the bodily existence outside of ordinary food. The "in the

sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" here fell away. God fed His people with Manna. Something intended not spiritually, but bodily. They ate Manna and lived.

Fourteen centuries later Christ in the wilderness was tempted of Satan, also at the point of food. He did not eat forty days and forty nights. And for Christ no visible Manna came down from heaven, as for Israel. God sustained Christ's body in a wondrous, *hidden*, invisible way. And when in the end Satan took advantage of this absence of all visible food, to tempt Christ, and called on Him to make bread of stones, Jesus said that here the key to the mystery lay in the rule, that our bodily life, for its sustenance, is not in the absolute sense dependent upon bread, for that God is mighty to make His word go forth, and merely by that word to protect our bodily life from destruction and death.

Thus history mentioned two things.

First the *visible* Manna, which maintained Israel in the wilderness; and secondly the non-visible, but *hidden* Manna, with which the Father fed Christ's body in the wilderness.

Now the deepest mystery lay not in this visible Manna, for, said Jesus, "Your fathers have eaten this visible Manna, *and have died*." He Himself on the other hand received the *hidden* Manna, and lives, after soul *and body*, eternally.

By that *hidden* Manna He was sustained those forty days and forty nights in the wilderness. By that *hidden* Manna He lived the forty days after His resurrection, until His ascension. By that *hidden* Manna He has since lived all these centuries in His glorified body at the Right hand of the Father.

And now Jesus promises His redeemed, who over-

come, that they also shall not only one day receive back again their body "like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3, 21); but also, that in their glorified body they will be sustained, not by bread, and neither by a visible Manna, like Israel, who have died, but by that same *hidden* Manna, by which He Himself lives with the Father.

It is in all these promises the constant refrain, that as Christ is, so also His Redeemed, who overcame, shall be. They will sit with Him in His Throne, as He is seated with His Father in His Throne. And so too, they will be sustained, bodily sustained, by the hidden Manna, as He Himself was sustained by this hidden Manna and continued so, first in the wilderness, and now at the Right hand of the Father.

IN Paradise it was the maintenance of the body without labor and trouble, for Paradise itself offered all manner of fruit. On the earth under the curse it became: eating bread in the "sweat of his face." But over there in the Realm of holiness not only that punishment and that curse pass away, so that there will be no more mention of labor in the sweat of the face, but more yet, it will there be an abundance still richer, still more luxuriant, still more glorious, than it ever was in Paradise. God Himself will sustain His own, spiritually by His Spirit, and bodily by the *hidden* Manna.

It is the same thought which the holy apostle thus expresses: "Meats (food) are for the belly and the belly is for food, *but God shall* destroy both it and them" (1 Cor. 6, 13).

Only, what Paul expresses merely by way of *negation*, saying that then also ordinary feeding by food and through the belly, which applies here, shall not take place yonder in this way, Jesus on Patmos expresses in positive sense. Not only does the earthly maintenance of the body then fall away, but it is superseded by an heavenly maintenance of the body, and that heavenly maintenance does not take place by a Manna as in the wilderness, but by a Manna, which is not, as then, visible and tangible, but which shall be invisible and hidden.

To him who on earth bathes himself in wealth and affluence, the glory of this comforting thought is certainly less striking.

But he who knows the care, the trouble and the struggle which for millions and yet again millions of the children of men the question of feeding self and family presents every day and sometimes distressingly by night, recognizes here also the *Christus Consolator*, Who wondrously and as with hidden Manna fed the five thousand, and every time again shows how profoundly He understands the cares and the distress of life.

He who will take all this only spiritually, blots out a whole page of the compassions of Christ, forgets what He said of the rich man and poor Lazarus, and overlooks the spiritual significance, which also lies in that anxiety for bread as punishment for the sake of sin. He sees in Jesus a Redeemer of the soul, but no *perfect* Redeemer, not One also a Savior from distress and want.

He, on the other hand, who counts with the grinding cares under the load of which by far the greater part of humanity groans, counts with the strength and time, lost everywhere in the sheer preparation of bread and food, and counts also with the endless sicknesses and ailments, which spring from insufficient, wrong or excessive feeding of the blood, he feels and handles, how the maintenance of the body consumes human strength, stifles the heart and is cause of endless trouble.

To be rid of the body and at last be pure soul, then seems deliverance; and from this explains itself, that obtaining the body back again, that the resurrection of the flesh has with most people little or no count, does not interest nor enchant them, and that it would trouble them little, if it never came.

Yet such is not the way of the Lord.

When you die and put off the weary body, you know that you eternally obtain back again a glorified body. This is God's ordinance. He created you as man. And God has willed that man should exist as a being of soul and body both. And therefore the body *must* come back to you.

And to banish from this expectation every idea of fear, as though with the body something of the old want and of the old distress might return, and contrariwise to give you the positive assurance, that then also in your new bodily appearance it shall all be blessedness, eternal glory, endless joy and uninterrupted rejoicing, therefore Jesus gave His people also this every distress-banishing promise: That He will then Himself maintain our glorified body, not by bread and not by food, but by an *hidden* Manna, in which God's almightiness will glorify itself.

“*In the White Stone a New Name*”

THE program in seven parts, announced by Christ Himself to all His churches in the earth, with respect to *him who overcometh*, refers to what follows *after death*, and not to salvation or glory already in *this* life.

He that overcometh shall eat of the Tree of Life, . . . but only in the Paradise of God. He shall not be hurt of the second death . . . after he shall have passed through the first death. And so here: He that overcometh receives the hidden Manna, and the white stone, . . . but not now, . . . only when the last battle shall have been fought, and he of us who dies as conqueror, shall have entered through the gate of heaven.

For one moment let that “Hidden Manna” rest, and take first *that white stone*.

The value of that white stone does not hide in the stone as such, the word stone is not even mentioned*; and all the emphasis falls on what is engraven in that stone.

Already this points to a higher state of soul.

A dealer in jewels gives fabulous prices for a sapphire of unusual size, even though in the vignette there is but a single letter engraved; for an agate, though it bear a royal coat of arms, he offers almost nothing.

Finer sense, on the other hand, personally feels

* It says *psêphos*.

richer with a seal of ancient nobility, though the stone be less precious, than with the most expensive stone, which lacks the noble engraving.

In heaven that nobler stone is perfect. Not the stone, the engraving in the stone determines its value in the Father-house. It is the same which the foundations of the new Jerusalem tell you. One is of Sapphire, another of Topaz, a third of Chalcedon, according to our price-list of jewels altogether different, but one in the new Jerusalem.

Not the stone, but what the stone tells determines the value in the hereafter. And the stone here speaks of two things, for it is *white* and bears a *name*.

It is a *white* stone, in keeping with the "fine *white* linen" of God's saints, alluding to the fact that they are cut off from what was sin, or was called sin, or bordered upon sin.

And the engraving on that stone tells a *name*. That name will be your *name*. Not the name, by which you were called on earth, not the name whereby you were baptized, but the name which God shall give you. Your name for ever in the heavens.

THAT white stone with the mysterious name is a seal. It is not a stone as ornament in crown or neck-chain. It is not a stone, as a precious jewel to be kept in hiding. It is the *stone* that belongs with the *robe*.

When Pharaoh elevated Joseph, he gave orders, that he should be arrayed "in vestures of fine linen," and took off his *seal-ring* from his hand, and "put it upon Joseph's hand" (Gen. 4, 41, 42). Also Mordecai

received from Ahasuerus an "upper garment of fine linen," and he "took off his *seal-ring* from his finger and gave it unto Mordecai" (Esther 8, 2, 15).

The *garment* and the *stone* together are the symbolized glory of him whom the King elevates to honor.

The believer who died in Christ, and as victor appears before his king, is thereby placed in honor, so that the "fine white garment" is put about the shoulders, and the ring with the engraved stone is put upon his finger.

Here *disdain* and *abuse*, but for him that overcometh at his coming into glory *honor*. Always Joseph who comes out of prison, and afterward obtains elevation and glory. An antithesis, which goes through even in the sense, that the measure of abuse on earth, determines the measure of glory above.

The more deeply the spring here was pressed down, the mightier it will rebound in the hereafter.

And such with causal connection.

It is the very deep disdain which here makes faith strike root the more firmly, and which makes the fruit of faith in Paradise above bloom the more luxuriantly.

CHARACTERISTIC of that white stone is the *name* engraven on it. Not one name for all believers, but for every one of God's children his *own* name. A name which expresses his *being*. Even a name which expresses that being so profoundly and so fundamentally, that mysterious to every one else, it is only understood by him or her, whose being it expresses.

For so it reads: And in the stone a new name

written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it (Rev. 2, 17).

Thus not the name you bore here. That will then have become your *old* name and will fall away, and in its place comes then the *new* name. And you will not receive that new name from human lips, for no one knows it, but from your God, Who knows it, and on that white stone gives it to you in private, forever to remain a secret between you and your God. And so gives it, that you can never forget it, for it is engraven in a precious stone, which even as the white raiment, remains your possession forever.

Says the Scripture of God: "His *name* sees* the *being*" (Micah. 6, 9).

Such it is not here on earth. Our names are labels. They express nothing. Here you bear a name, which hundreds of others bear likewise. Mostly even you bear your name, because your father or mother bare that name before you.

With us the name is a family tie. Nothing personal. Not something your own. Not something in which your being is expressed.

And that can not be otherwise. For you received your name as an infant, before any one knew what was latent in you or what would develop from you.

And even if later on you would have wanted to change your name, in a proper name to express your person, you would not have succeeded in it, simply because *you do not know yourself*.

No one on earth has ever fathomed his own being.

Until we die we remain to ourselves the *deepest mystery*.

* Comprehends and expresses.—Tr.

BUT this then is the glory, which awaits us after dying, that the veil will be taken away from our face, and as in a clear mirror God will show us our own being.

Then only. Not before.

And herein is grace. If here on earth we were ever to have a sight of our own being as we actually are, we would be terrified at ourselves. Even as the loving wife, who hastened to the hospital to see her husband, who had been wounded on the field of battle, when she saw his misshapen, bandaged face, involuntarily recoiled, so would our soul shrink back from ourselves, if we were to see in clearness our own being soiled by sin and enwound by grace.

And therefore Jesus tarries. And He will only let you see yourself, when the latest trace of sin is gone and the last bandage has been removed, and you can see yourself as a model of Christ's redeeming love, altogether sound and altogether healed.

Then the mystery of your person falls away from before you.

And God Who *alone* knows your being, because He Himself has fore-ordained and created you, and has kept you, and has restored you, will then discover you to yourself, reveal your own being to you and in your own being, *for God's sake*, make you rich.

FOR God's sake!

For therein consists the majestic richness of God as Creator, that He did not create millions of people *alike*, but that He created no two who are the same, but

in every child of man something else, something new, the embodiment of a *proper* Divine thought.

Therein glorifies itself the infinite richness of His manifold wisdom, that every child of God, every elect is something by himself, something which no other one is, and something that therefore can not be missed, because not one child of God can ever take the place of another.

Think that one child of God fell out, and there would forever be a blank. In the Divine diadem a gem would be wanting.

So that own *name* speaks of an own being; that own being of an own *thought of God*; and that particular thought of God regarding you of a particular *calling*, a *proper task*, a *place* all your own, which you are to occupy in the kingdom of God.

And when you arrive above in the presence of your King, and your King discovers to you your own name, and in that name you discover your own being, you will perceive as cause of eternal thanks, how you indeed have all your life long failed to appreciate your own being, given you of God, and have neglected it, but how the God of all grace, apart from you, and in opposition to you, has maintained this your being, has protected it, saved it when at the point of perishing, and now shows it you not only as He *created* it, but also as He re-created it, and now discovers it to you in chaste and unblemished glory.

What here in your selfishness you loved, was a *false* image of yourself. What you will then love in the love of God, is your *real* being, which you do not owe to yourself, but solely and alone to your Creator and your Redeemer, your Father and your God.

“Power Over the Heathen”

ALSO “power over the heathen” (Rev. 2, 26, Dutch ver.), which Christ promises the victor, does not refer to this life, but to that glorious future, when once eternity begins.

To prevent misunderstanding, it is even expressly added: He that overcometh, and keepeth *my works unto the end*. For “to the end” can not mean anything else, than “to the end of his life,” or “to My return upon the clouds,” and thus in any case excludes the struggle *in* this life, the battle which *still continues*. There is no victor, until the battle has been fought to the finish, and the decision is rendered. This does not mean, that the Church, that Christian nations, already now, by way of prelude to the final act, may not in part obtain power over the Heathen. All splendor and glory which is once to come in eternity, sheds already in advance its brightness abroad in this life.

Christians received *in part* power over the Heathen, when Constantine put away the idols, and planted the Cross in his palace. The Church received *in part* power over the Heathen, when the peoples of Northern and Western Europe were converted to Christ. Even now Christian Nations exercise *in part* power over the Heathen in their colonial struggle. Asia and Africa have become tributary to them.

All this, however, is not yet *the* power over the Heathen. When Constantine overcame Heathendom, a

part of the heathen nature entered into Jesus' church. Baptized Europe sanctioned heathen things in Christian forms. Even now it is not the Christian-powers which won Asia and Africa for Christ, but which in their colonies make Christian-colonists drink heathen venom; and let all their politics be dominated by greed and heathen ideas of might.

Therefore the fulfilment of Jesus' promise on Patmos, must not be sought in this provisional play.

Also this promise of Jesus, even as all the other promises of Patmos, does *not* refer to the present, but to the eternity to come, and to the glory that shall once be manifest.

And with respect to *that* future we are promised by Jesus: To him that overcometh, and keepeth *my* works (not those of the heathen) unto the end, will I give power over the heathen, and he shall shepherd them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken in shivers, even as I received of my Father.

IN the church of Thyatira the condition was bewildering. A condition as under Ahab and Jezebel in Israel. A group of confessors, under the lead of a woman of influence and prominence, introduced into the Church of Christ the abominations of Baal-Peor. Under the mask of piety the grossest sensuality. The real *heathen* nature, from the days when Phineas with his javelin thrust through Zimri the adulterer and Cozbi, the Midianitish woman, had already now, while the apostles were still alive, entered into Christ's church.

And such not as an hidden evil, but as an openly advocated system, had been adopted as a part of the *cere-monial itself*. Something which later on repeated itself among Baptist sects, and in the circles of Mysticism often yet works out its aftermath, but from the Nicolaitanes, in the second century of Christ's church, first turned into Manicheanism.

You do not understand it, and yet so it was, the most abominable service of the flesh mingled in veneration and worship of Him, Who counted the looking upon a woman to desire her, as already adultery in the heart.

From two sides the heathen nature entered the heart of the Christian religion. From without and from within. *From without* by oppression, persecution and effort to eradication. And *from within* by poisoning with heathen sin and sensuality.

The *hangman* by order of Heathendom raged with the sword. The *woman*, as bearer of heathen poison, charmed with her enticements. Always again Ahab who murdered the prophets, and Jezebel who tempted the people to sin.

The heathen nature which, realizing that, if Christ triumphs, it itself must go to the death, applies all its power and sensual beguilement, if possible, to destroy the Christian nature.

Here, every time, conditions, as though the heathen nature prevails, and Christ is worsted. And therefore Christ on Patmos, at the beginning of the contest, saying to His churches: Provided ye persevere and overcome, absolute triumph over the heathen nature once awaits you.

AND here also the promise proceeds from *fellowship with Christ*. It always is the key-note of the High-priestly prayer: “I have given them the glory which Thou gavest me” (John 17, 22). If they suffer with me, they shall also be glorified with me. As Christ is, so also shall those be that are His in His glory.

What was promised Him in Psalm 2, that He would shepherd the heathen with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel, that same promise Jesus here takes and applies to those that are His. As long as here on earth they wander as pilgrims, constant danger from the side of the heathen nature, both to be *oppressed*, and to be *poisoned* by it. But in the future of the Lord also in this respect glory for oppression, glory for disdain. They will then have dominion *with Christ* over that heathen nature, and feel that before their scepter it falls back, and as before their feet is broken in pieces.

Thus everything harmonizes, and the interpretation leaves no room for doubt.

In Psalm 2 it says, that the heathen rage against God’s anointed King, saying: “Let us break His bands asunder and cast His cords from us”; and the Decree narrates of a future, in which God’s anointed King shall dash that heathen nature in pieces before His feet.

In the church of Thyatira that heathen nature with its deadly poison entered by sensual worship. Instead of raging malice there was *enticement*. And now also Jesus stimulates to resistance, by giving a unisonous promise to all that are His.

If they persevere that heathen nature shall once be brought to nought, and as now they suffer under it,

they who hold fast to Jesus, shall then triumph over it.

HE does not appreciate this promise in the least, who never thinks of this heathen nature, except when there is mention of Caffres and Dyaks, and flatters himself that his contribution of some ten dollars a year for Missions quite covers all his responsibility with respect to the heathen world.

To such shallow natures and superficial religious people Jesus on Patmos had nothing to say. What Jesus there says, is for him that hath ears to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. They are promises for His prophets, for His earnest believers, for His choice companies, for those who go under in the fight, and in the battle of the Lord find the task of their life.

And then from the nature of the case it is altogether different.

Then the heathen nature is not gone from Europe and banished to Asia and Africa, but in Christianized Europe it is still in all sorts of ways undermining, threatening, oppressing, poisoning, the Christian nature, and scheming its destruction.

All the clamor that "Clericalism" must be resisted, that "Clericalism" is the enemy, and that the nation must be delivered from "Clericalism," is nothing but the ancient emancipation-fever, in Psalm 2, which is ever yet instigated and fed by the heathen nature in our Christian nations.

All that is called "modern Christendom," one part faith mingled with nine parts philosophy, is nothing

but that old heathen nature, which in the name of Christ is brought into the church of Christ and destroys her.

And also, everything that is said, to make the material triumph over the spiritual, to make stern morals looser, to introduce heartless dissoluteness, to crown free love, and to repress all count with guilt by the cowardice of irresponsibility, is nothing else than that same old heathen nature, which poisons our Christian society.

Of this they who are "at ease in Zion" feel nothing. But the faithful witnesses of the Lord suffer under it. His prophets avert the poisoned arrows of this evil with the shield of faith. Life oppresses them, harrows their soul. And these are they, who in their moaning heart fight the deadly danger of the poisoning of this heathen nature.

For them it is constant depression, on one hand, with their whole soul to believe in Jesus, and yet on the other hand again and every time again to perceive, that the heathen nature spreads like a cancer, represses the Christian element, gains triumph upon triumph, and with wild laughter as that of demons rejoices over their defeat and anguish.

Under it the very elect would succumb; and that they might *not* succumb, Jesus on Patmos revealed to them His decree, that it can not be otherwise, that the heathen nature must continue to vex them till the end.

But also, that this is merely for a time.

That once the triumph over that heathen nature shall be entire. And that in that day God's anointed King shall not tread the wine-press alone, but that He

will give His redeemed people full fellowship in so glorious a result.

How? Jesus does not say.

But this guarantees His promise to us: If we overcome to the end, we shall ourselves have part in the complete subjection of the heathen nature.

Not Christ alone shall do it, but we with Him.

SOMETIMES it seems, that to seek honor were sin. Accustomed to being oppressed and defeated, one imagines, that to be willing to suffer, to be willing to be oppressed, to be willing to bend the head, were the highest.

And this must not be. This is to violate our nature, as man to cast away our highness and our holy character.

For this reason Jesus stimulates in us the opposite feeling.

What He promises us is the crown, is the dominion, is the sitting on a throne, is the triumph over our enemies.

And that exalted sense Jesus stimulates and makes keen in us, not that here we should swell the breast or assert ourselves against our humbler fellowmen. No, but that we should understand, that in the midst of his oppression only then a king's child does not dishonor himself, when in the face of his oppression he restlessly puts the protest of the certainty of his future exaltation.

“And I Will Give Him the Morning Star”

IN Thyatira’s church, this is added to the victor in this spiritual battle, that from Christ he shall receive the *morning star*.

Begin by understanding this in the literal sense. He that overcometh shall receive spotless white raiment (3, 5). He that overcometh shall receive a white stone (2, 17). And so he that overcometh, shall also receive “the *morning star*” (2, 28).

Especially seen under Eastern heavens the Morning Star makes altogether the impression of a sparkling diamond. If the victor be given tokens of high honor, whether a gold neck-chain, or a glittering jewel, no higher token of honor is thinkable than one that images the Morning Star. Among Christian nations the token of honor became the Cross, but among Eastern peoples it is still a star. So has England’s Queen Victoria as late as 1861 instituted the order of *the star of India*; the king of Belgium for the Congo State in 1888 the order of *the African star*, and in 1875 the Sultan of Zanzibar the order of the *Beaming Star*. Cross and star you find together in the Austrian order of the Starry Cross instituted in 1688 as symbol of the victory over Islam.

When Christ portrays the redeemed who go into glory in the image of the Conqueror on earth, there is nothing more natural, than that the image is here employed of the decoration of a Star. Just before it had been stated, that the Victor received power over the

Heathen, and as token of that high dominion, always in holy figurative speech, the badge of the Morning Star is attached to his hero-breast.

That this is figurative language, and that the victor does not himself receive the Morning Star, is already evident from the language here employed, which does not say: I shall give him one, but *the* Morning Star. For the redeemed who as Victors go into heaven, are thousands and yet again ten thousands, and yet there is but *one* Morning Star.

Not the Morning Star *itself* therefore is meant, but a symbolic badge of honor similar to the Morning Star in splendor.

As the Morning Star excels all our stars in glow and gleam and glistening, so shall the honor-token, which he receives who in this spiritual fight of faith perseveres to the end, and overcomes, in glory very far excel every earthly honor badge of victory.

Thus the Morning Star here is not the Christ, as in Rev. 22, 16 it reads: "I am the bright and Morning Star"; for on Patmos it is Christ Himself, Who gives the Morning Star as a badge of honor. Neither is the Morning Star here the brightness of the Gospel, as it reads in 2 Peter 1, 19, that the regenerated have the day star arise in their heart. For he who enters heaven, can not then for the first time receive the Gospel. What is said here, that Christ shall give the Victor the Morning Star, points to a token of honor and glory awarded to the Victor, altogether on one line with the white triumph raiment which is placed about his shoulders, and with the white stone in the seal-ring.

THE symbolicalness which is here expressed, is, be it mystical, yet altogether clear, provided you observe, that this badge of honor is token of the power over the heathen nature, in connection with which it is mentioned in one breath.

Holy Scripture always and unchangeably portrays the heathen nature in the image of *night and darkness*. He who becomes incorporated in the Mediator “is translated from the *realm of darkness* into the Kingdom of the Son” (Col. 1, 13). “The people that sat in *darkness*, already Isaiah sang, shall see a *great light*.” With the coming of the Gospel, says St. Paul, God hath commanded the light to shine *out of darkness* (2 Cor. 4, 6). Already Simeon proclaimed, that Christ would be “*a light to lighten the Gentiles*” (Heathen). Demons are “the rulers of this world, *of the darkness of this age*” (Eph. 6, 12). “Out of *darkness* God has called us,” says St. Peter 1: 2, 9, “into His marvellous light.” “We ourselves, we were *formerly darkness*, children of night, but, now, that the day star has risen in our hearts, are we *children of the day*, we have become *children of light*” (Eph. 5, 8).

It is light that triumphs over darkness, as the child of God, that overcomes, triumphs over the Heathen abomination.

Day comes when night is past, and it is the Morning Star, which images this transition from darkness to light, announces and makes it real.

The heathen nature has also falsified this glorious Morning Star in meaning. The Morning Star is, as we know, one and the same as the Evening Star, and to this the heathen nature addressed itself, and saw *Venus* in it, or also the Satanic power, represented by Isaiah

in Nebuchadnezzar (14, 12). Venus and Lucifer!

But in God's rich, wondrous Creation, taken and understood in its original significance, the Morning Star is ever the symbolic expression of light that triumphs over darkness, literally in nature when night gives place to day, and metaphorically in the Gospel and in Christ Himself, when the darkness of Heathendom is driven back, and the clearness of the Divine light of truth shines in the human heart.

And as the redeemed, who enters heaven, has taken part in the struggle between the Light and the Darkness, and from that struggle has come out as Victor, as he enters heaven he receives both power over the heathen, and as symbol of the same the token of the Morning Star.

BUT to him this token is not without meaning; it contains promise of reality. He who receives the triumph robe of white, has therein the guarantee of undefilable holiness. He who receives the white stone in the seal-ring, has therein guarantee of all selfknowledge penetrating all his being. And so he who receives the token of the Morning Star, has therein guarantee of inherent power over the realm of darkness.

"Power over the Heathen" is the power of resistance against the heathen nature from without; the Morning Star which he wears on his breast, is token of dominion over the heathen nature that once had room in *his own heart*.

The talisman, of which on earth, especially in

the East, false dreams have been dreamed, becomes here holy reality.

This sign of the Morning Star is a guarantee which renders the soul inwardly invulnerable to every temptation which from the heathen nature crept into the heart.

The Morning Star is not merely a power outside of him—he *receives*, and he then *possesses* the Morning Star. By its glow and brightness that Morning Star averts every return of night and darkness. Under the beams of the Morning Star, on his breast, it continues *eternal morning* in his heart.

Darkness has no more power over him, night can no more come nigh him.

The Morning Star, which never leaves him, wards off every return of darkness in the soul.

AND so the antithesis is sharply drawn.

Here on earth the church militant, which battles *under the sign of the Cross*; above the church triumphant which triumphs *under the sign of the Morning Star*, taken both spiritually and externally.

Here on earth inside of one twenty-four hours the lovely light of sun setting again in darkness of night, presently in the realm of glory never more any twilight or night. For the Lamb shall be our light, and the splendor of the eternal morning shall endlessly rain down upon us. Does it not say in Revelation 22, 5: *And there shall be no night there?*

And equally so spiritually.

Here on earth believe and live and struggle under the banner of the Cross, and every time again the dark-

ness of sorrow, the night of suffering coming upon us. Walking along through darkneses, and again being refreshed by the light of God's friendly countenance.

But presently, when the fight has been fought and the victory gained, this shall end. Then for the victor it shall never again be night, but also never again shall the darkness of night enter his heart. His, then, shall be the Morning Star, and with it the assurance of never setting light be guaranteed to the life of his soul.

Our God eternally the Father of lights, and we as children of light surrounding His Throne.

Christ our Morning Star, and every one of us bearing the sign of the Morning Star in the heart forever redeemed from the power of sin.

“Clothed in White Raiment”

TO be clothed with “the white raiment” is to be robed in the garment of the Victor, in the festal garb of the Triumpher, in the magnificent attire of him who conquered.

Here, too, the exalted metaphorical language goes on.

All peoples of those days knew the homage, which was accorded him, who defeated the enemy and in triumph returned from war.* At the head of his joy-intoxicated army the general made his triumphal entry, luminous with victory.

Thus to triumph before all eyes, and luminant with victory amid the shouting of the masses to be escorted through the gate of the city, was the highest glory accorded the heroic warrior. He adorned and attired in the robe of splendor, and his enemies chained to his triumphal car.

All war and strife, and likewise all victory on earth is but the weakened reflection of the great struggle between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan, and therefore every earthly triumphal procession is merely the faint image of the all else exceeding triumph of him who marches in through the gate of the New Jerusalem.

Thus the image is not labored. Of itself it is pre-

* Here the author plays on the Dutch word: *Zegepralen*, in which echoes the shouting of the admiring multitudes. He writes: *Zege* is victory, and *pralen* is to shine or glisten. So that “*Zegepralen*” means: *To be luminant with victory.*—*Tr.*

sented to us. And so the Christ on Patmos continues to describe the entry of His redeemed into the realm of glory always in the image of him who triumphs upon earth.

Returning in an exhausted state from the struggle of life and death, the weary worn hero is first refreshed by the *Tree of Life*, and strengthened by the *Hidden Manna*. Thereupon the white stone in the seal-ring is put upon his hand. The vanquished heathen nature is chained to his triumphal car. He receives *power over the Heathen*. Then the badge of the Morning Star is hung about his neck. And now the robe of honor is folded round him, *the white raiment*, which Christ Himself shall give him.

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment” (Rev. 3, 5).

THERE is here a play on words, which leads to confusion, him who reads it cursorily. What immediately precedes it is: “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.”

Thus *the same* garments seem here to be spoken of twice, but this is not so.

The garments that are not defiled, are the garments, which are worn on the battle-field; the white robe of triumph is the festal garment that is put on *after* the battle was ended and had resulted in radiant triumph.

The garments worn during the struggle, in battle, are not white, but colored; they are red, they are yellow, they are dark gray, but they are never white. Spots are by no means seen only upon the white garment, but

are equally much in evidence on the red military cloak, which was worn at the time.

The spot stains, the blot also upon the red garment, begrimes and makes dirty.

But something altogether different is the *white raiment*. White raiment is the robe of *light*. It is the robe that shows no color, but which reflects the full splendor of light. The robe as wherein the angel appeared. The robe of light, as wherein Jesus shone on Tabor. The white raiment of light is the *robe of heaven*.

The robe, that is washed in the blood of the Lamb, is the earthly robe, the robe in which the battle was fought, the robe that was begrimed in the heat of war. Image of this was the red military robe of the soldier, like as was put about Jesus in the house of justice. And only of that red robe can it be said, that it is washed in blood. If then in Rev. 7, 14 it is said additionally that they wash these same robes *white*, it refers to the exchange of the earthly robe for the white robe of heaven upon their entrance into the realm of glory.

The distinction always goes through between the *earthly* garment and the *heavenly* raiment. The heavenly raiment shows no tint, but only sheen, and it can not be soiled. The earthly garment has color, and because soiled, is washed.

White is no color, as little as *black*. *Black* is the darkness, which in ashen gray permits no tint to appear. And *white* is no color, because it embraces all colors in itself. White is the highest lustre, even as iron can become *white-hot*. And it is only when the light-beam breaks, that the blue, red and yellow, as the three main colors, and presently from these three all the other tints develop themselves.

For this reason Scripture says, that God is clothed with light as with a garment. For this reason it is written of God's angels, that at the opened grave of Jesus their countenance was like lightning, and their raiment white as snow (Matt. 28, 3). And for this reason no less, that of Jesus on Tabor it is written: "His raiment *became white as the light*" (Matt. 17, 2).

Also in the promises to those of Sardis it is the same, as we found before: what Jesus promises the Victor is the glory He himself has. "Power over the Heathen as He received the same of the Father." "To sit with Him on the throne, as He Himself is seated with the Father on His throne." And so here: "They shall walk with me in white" (Rev. 3, 4).

God Himself surrounded by light as a garment. The Mediator in His glory clothed upon with a garment, white as the light. So likewise the redeemed who overcomes, clothed upon with the robe of light, with the garment which as the snow is not merely bright in its whiteness, but in its whiteness makes all brilliancies glisten.

This robe is the robe of exchange.

As the victor who victorious ascended the triumphal car, took off the military garb, in which he had fought the fight, and exchanged it for the bright garment of the triumpher, so also is the garment which we wear here on earth, in real and in metaphorical sense taken off from us at dying, and exchanged for heaven's garment of light.

The body is *changed*. It is *the same* body that first goes into death, and then immortal is raised in glory. But not so the garment. The garment is laid aside, the garment is not changed. But heaven's shining robe of

light takes *the place* of the garment that has become unfit for use.

The earthly garment is a covering of *our shame*, and therefore in paradise by God Himself fallen man is clothed with the fleece of a lamb. The heavenly robe is heightening of brightness and glory, put upon us at our entry into the realm of glory.

The hero, who as he is about to take his place in his triumphal car, takes off the military garb and puts on the white robe of honor, expresses thereby, that the bloody task is ended, and that now, no longer afraid of any bespattering with the blood of the enemy or with blood of wounds of his own, he puts on a robe, which no more tolerates spot or wrinkle.

When, therefore, our Savior says this glorious word to those who as victors enter heaven, that He shall clothe them with the *white robe of light*, it does not mean *reconciliation*; to this the washed garment refers, which is an altogether different image; no, it expresses the consummation of the hardships of the battle, the entering in of the eternal Sabbath, the eternal cessation of all evil works, the *impossibility* of being any more enticed or tempted by Satan, or of being any more wounded, the being lifted above all strife, the unsusceptibility to every enticement of sin, because over *sin*, the world and Satan triumph is consummated.

Here below Satan and his demons every time laughing us to scorn, when we stumble *again* and stain our garment. But there above, with the holy robe of light as our suit of armor, where no single arrow of the Evil one any more penetrates, we in our holy triumph laughing at Satan and his demons.

In the robe of light, and in that robe of light safe.

“A Pillar in the Temple”

THE mere sound of the promise, that he who overcometh, shall once be made a *pillar*, does not particularly appeal to our ordinary sense. Scripture itself tells of but one individual, who was turned into a pillar, and that was the wife of Lot. One punished because of her unbelief, of whose dreadful lot Jesus Himself reminded the eleven, surely not for imitation, but as warning (Luke 17, 32).

At once therefore the emphasis must be put upon the words that accompany it: *A pillar in the temple of God*. And in this connection to bring closer to us the ever yet strange comparison of a *man* with a *pillar*, you can do no better, than to understand by it a *pillar of support*. “*A pillar of support in God’s church*” was, at the close of the last and in the beginning of this century, a common expression, which especially after some one’s death was very popular. It was particularly in vogue with respect to a prominent and wealthy member of the church, who had been ordinarily pious, a lover of his pastor, and liberal in his contributions, as often as, solicited or unsolicited, money and *much* money was required by the church, for her poor or for her clergy. *Spiritually* in those unspiritual days this image of “pillar of support” was less in vogue. It was as Bilderdyk sang: “When on account of her guilt a nation must perish, in church begins the leprosy of soul.” And in those days especially the church-front leaned ever more crookedly toward Mammon.

Though indeed the image of “pillar of support” renders service, in lessening the strangeness of the expression, as regards the matter itself the promise of Jesus stands directly over against it.

It is not said, that the pastor-loving dead was a pillar for God’s church, but promised, that Jesus Himself will *make* him, who overcame, to be a pillar in the temple of God.

In this glorious promise there is no mention of the militant church on earth, but of the church triumphant above.

The entire church-idea indeed falls away, to go up in the image of the *temple of God*. It is in that *temple of God*, that, according to Jesus’ rich promise on Patmos, every Christian hero who overcame, and conquering entered upon eternal life, by Christ Himself shall be placed as one of the pillars in the completed structure.

IN allied figurative language St. Peter had said something similar of the church on earth. Together the redeemed must form “one spiritual house.” Of this spiritual house Christ was “the chief corner stone.” And now every believer must be “a stone in that house,” a “*living stone*,” that by new addition of believers the walls of this spiritual house might every time rise higher (1 Peter 2, 4, 5).

But in Jesus’ promise there is mention of something far more glorious.

If Peter compared the church on earth to an *house*, to walls raised in *stone*, here on Patmos the Lord

chooses the far richer image of a *temple* with *colonnades*, like that of which Athens gave the magnificent example, and similar temples in all the cities of Asia Minor, and also in the cities to which these seven epistles are addressed, such as at Philadelphia, to whose church the letter with the mention of the pillar at the end went out, which by their magnificence of architecture roused admiration.

So by the magnificence and luxuriousness of their temples the Heathen as it were took out the eyes of Jew and Christian. By the side of such temples the Synagogue fell away altogether, and Christians gathered in the upper room of one of the friends.

On earth the Church repressed, small, insignificant, in everything bearing the sign of the Cross; but in the great and illustrious day this was to become otherwise. Then all Heathen magnificence of building would fall into ruins, but gloriously from heaven the "new Jerusalem" would come down. In this new Jerusalem the *temple of God* would no longer be the copy of what Moses saw in the mount, but the rich original itself, which amid heavenly splendor had been shown to Moses. And this temple, would be built, not of dead stone, but from spirit and life. Heroes, heroes who had overcome, would in that temple bear up the sacred pinnacle, in more beautiful image and far purer harmony, than ever Athens had represented it symbolically in her colonnades.

ON earth the temple stands *alongside* of life. Zion is added to Jerusalem. This can not be otherwise, this

must be so, because the temple encloses the sacred and shuts it off from the unholy life of the world.

But in the realm of glory this antithesis falls away. Then everything is holy. Holy the life itself. Therefore in the future of our Lord a temple *alongside* of life is unthinkable, and St. John tells us (Rev. 21, 22): “*I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord, the Almighty God, is her temple, and the Lamb.*”

Of course, where everything is temple, there is no place for a temple apart. There life itself has become one temple-life. And there that temple-life does not rest upon pillars of granite, but upon the heroes of faith and upon the heroines of faith, who in Jesus' power have captured that temple from Satan and the world. And in that temple, they are no longer as in earth stones masoned away or hidden, but columns, pillars, which stand out in full length, in life-size, slender, and glisten in the fullness of their appearance. Glisten as Jesus has hewn them, as Jesus makes them rest upon their pedestal, as Jesus adorns them with the capital as with the crown of victory, as Jesus shall arrange them in orderly series and ranks, as Jesus in mutual relation shall unite them into one whole.

HEREIN lies the blessedness of indispensableness. From the wall of a house a stone can be removed, and the house still stand. But from the structure composed of pillars, not one pillar can be missed, without the beauty being broken, and the bearing-power of the whole being torn from its relation.

The pillars are numbered. Every pillar is one. And

not one can be thought away, without the charming beauty of harmony being lost.

This makes the promise of Jesus, that he who overcometh shall be a column, a pillar, so warm and significant. The temple of God is not finished without you. Only when you also shall have been given your place in it, will it be completed in its heavenly loveliness. Yea, truly, because God elected you, are you likewise indispensable to the consummation of that structure.

And indispensable not only for the beauty of harmony. Because life here on earth is on so low a level, beauty of art in every way must be superior to life. But in the realm of glory all art falls away, because life itself shall be perfect in beautifulness.

The column, the pillar in the temple of God shall not merely be beautiful, but also *bear*.

Thus you will have significance with respect to that temple. You will be a part of it. However wonderful it may sound in your ears, the whole of it shall for your part rest upon you.

And Jesus shall make that true, not only for a Paul or Peter, or for whoever else who after the apostles, in Jesus' church appeared in the foreground, and whose name sounded far. O, no, Jesus shall make this to be a truth for *every one* who overcame. Also for the quiet folks in the land, for the forgotten ones, who here on earth had scarcely any count.

It shall be with this as with the stars of God in the firmament. You see sun and moon, and know a few starry figures besides. But who counts the thousand and ten thousand suns, with their wandering stars and satellites, which hide in the milky way? And yet all these also proclaim the glory of God, all these the Lord like-

wise knows by name, these also He calls, and see, no single one is missing.

And so in those illustrious colonnades of the eternal temple every elect of the Lord shall glisten with the others, shall bear up with the others, together with all saints shall constitute the one great whole. And Jesus shall so will it. Not you will there take a place, but Jesus shall there place you. In the glory which He has with the Father, His Mediator-heart does not rest. He wants to see the splendors of His glory themselves shine, beam and glisten through the endless colonnades of God's temple, and with this also not one, not even you can be missed.

Only, you must have *overcome*, overcome until the *end*. The heart that did not overcome Satan, but allowed itself to be overcome *by* Satan, goes into the grave dull and lustreless as the brick, and can never shine along in the heavenly colonnades of emerald and porphyry.

“And He Shall Go No More Out”

IN the seven epistles, which Christ on Patmos gave John to write to the seven churches, He, Who was already in heaven, braided seven heavenly wreaths, for those who as conquerors were to enter heaven.

To him that overcometh, so reads Rev. 2, 7, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death (2, 11).

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Manna that is hidden, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it (2, 17).

He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the Heathen, even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star (2, 26-28).

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels (3, 5).

Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name (3, 12).

And finally: *To him that overcometh*, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne (3, 21).

And to every one of these seven wreaths of victory, stitched in gold, is attached the word of exhortation: *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*. It does not read: To "the congregation" in the singular, but: to the congregations or churches in the plural.

Thus it is not a wreath of victory for Ephesus separately, different for Smyrna from the church at Pergamus, and different again for the churches of Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

It is one spiritual rainbow with its seven tints that arches itself over all Christ's churches together.

With nuances, be it so. Every one of these victor's wreaths was braided from a particular sort of palm-growth, which stood related to what in every one of these seven churches was more strongly evidenced than in the other.

But yet always so, that only in these seven wreaths together we have the fullness of the promises of Christ to "those who overcome in the faith."

Herein lies stimulus and urge to analyze these sevenfold promises more closely, since in their coherence they offer us the richest portrayal of the blessedness of the victors in the eternal light.

YET for this once we separate from the sixth wreath of victory this one palm branch: *He that overcometh*,

shall stand in the temple of our God, and he *shall go no more out.*

It is this promise that joins itself directly to the *dying unto sin*, and carries in itself the promise of the *perseverance of saints*, not as is known on earth, but as it is known and enjoyed in the Father-house above.

“Perseverance of saints” on earth only means, that he who is implanted in Christ can *apostatize*, but not forever *fall away*.

“Although this power of God,” so confessed our fathers at Dordt, “by which He confirms and preserves true believers in a state of grace, is greater, than that it can be overcome of the flesh, yet converts are not always so influenced and actuated by the Spirit of God, as not in some particular instances sinfully to deviate from the guidance of Divine grace, so as to be seduced by, and comply with, the lusts of the flesh. They must therefore be constant in watching and prayer, that they be not led into temptation. When these are neglected, they are not only liable to be drawn into great and heinous sins, by Satan, the world and the flesh, but sometimes by the righteous permission of God actually fall into these evils. This the lamentable fall of David, Peter, and other saints described in Holy Scripture, demonstrates.”

And further: “This doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, and the certainty thereof, which God hath most abundantly revealed in His Word, for the glory of His Name, and the consolation of pious souls, and which He impresses upon the hearts of the faithful, the carnal mind is not able to comprehend; Satan abhors it; the world ridicules it; the ignorant and hypocrites

abuse, and heretics oppose it; but the Spouse of Christ hath always most tenderly loved and constantly defended it, as an inestimable treasure; and God, against Whom neither counsel nor strength can prevail, will dispose her to continue this conduct to the end. Now, to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, forever, Amen” (Canons of Dordt. Art. IV and Art. XV).

If now already here *on earth* this “perseverance of saints” affords those who may believe it, such unforgettable comfort, how much the more glorious must not the sense of the “perseverance of saints” be *in heaven*, that there never can be any more falling back into sin, never more one single slip, let alone a fall or apostasy.

And yet, this is what is expressed by the sealed promise of the Lord: He that overcometh goes into the temple, *and shall never more go out*.

Not: he can go out, he will always be sure to come back.

No, far more glorious and far more positive: his foot shall never more be found, standing outside of the sanctuary, outside of the temple of his God.

SIN brings anxiety.

It is a power around and over us. A power, no longer in the sense that it has *dominion* over us, or, that, when it attacks us, we can not tear ourselves away from its tyranny. But it is and still remains a *power*, which every time again attacks us; against which we have to struggle from morning until evening, and even

in the night; and, . . . a struggle in which we are yet so often worsted.

In that struggle there is also victory, but, alas, after victory there follows every time again defeat. And sometimes it even seems as if victory had defeat as a consequence, when, too confident of our victory, we neglected to watch, to pray and to strive.

This then brings that constant anxiety in life. That tension and restlessness of soul. A tension that decreases when we sink, and only increases in our best moments. "Father, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from Evil" is only then most earnestly and most ardently prayed, when our heart came near again unto God.

And, when you enter heaven, that anxiety departs forever from the soul, never, never again to return.

Your dying unto sin, in your last gasp, is a breaking with sin forever. A bill of divorcement, which is never recalled. A tearing away from its grasp, without danger of being ever grasped by it again.

He who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, sees then the entrance to the sanctuary above forever barred.

Here on earth the gain is merely, that sin has no longer dominion over believers.

Up yonder it can no more come near them.

THIS is yet more strongly expressed by Jesus.

It does not read, that sin can no more come near you, but that you will never more go out from the temple of God, that is to say, that for you there is no more even temptation to sin, that sin has lost all hold

on your heart, and that for no single indivisible moment, the desire to go out from the temple of God, will ever arise in your heart.

Thus the stress of Jesus' promise lies in this, not that sin can no more come near you, but that, even if it could show itself once more at the door of that holy temple in all its treacherous enticement, you yourself would never feel the inclination, the drawing, the enticement to go out to it.

And that is the blessedness.

That is the purity of heaven.

That is the holiness of just men made perfect.

Sin charms, entices and draws them no more. Sin finds nothing more in their heart. No fiber in the soul, which moves any more toward sin. All sin has become entire dissonance to them. No single echo of the whisperings of sin, can be raised any more within them. Sin has become to them altogether abominable, the absolute evil, consummately repugnant. Sin is become to them the breath of Satan, and they thank their God eternally, that that poisonous breath of Satan never enters the Father-house.

When Asaph wandered about outside of God's temple, he was pricked in his reins, and sinful thoughts flamed up in his heart. And that lasted until he went back again into God's sanctuary, and then every sinful thought in him was extinguished. Read it in Psalm 73.

Well, the latter is the *continuous* condition of the blessed above. They are *in* the sanctuary. They go never more out from the sanctuary. And therefore, not even the thought, let alone the image of sin ever rises again in them.

AND now the question is put, not to the superficial who ever yet play with their soul, but to him who tries to live a sober and godly life, whether a more glorious, richer, more blessed thought can rise in him, than of being thus forever rid of sin and its enticement.

Not still *to have* to overcome, and only after every victory to enjoy the love and fellowship of his God, but *to have* overcome, and now to know that there is no more enemy left, that watching and striving, struggling and torturing of oneself are now ended, ended forever; and that now there is an eternal cessation of your evil works, a resting with the soul in the peace of God, a living in the eternal Sabbath.

Never more the spirit of Satan, but always the Holy Spirit, and Him alone operating in you.

Never more the self, but forever bathing yourself in nothing but undisturbed love, and in that love to be blessed.

In the temple of God.

Not in the imaged temple as on Zion, but in the real holy temple of God above, and you feeling at home in that temple, because everything in you is in perfect, in holy harmony with that glory of the temple of God.

No more going out from that temple in all the ages of eternity thinkable for you!

Is not that glorious?

*“And I Will Write Upon Him the Name of
My God”*

TO *mark* a person on his person, has fallen out of use with us.

Formerly this was done much, in the way in which now *animals* are still marked. When three shepherds have each one hundred sheep in a common pasture, there would be endless wrangling about sheep and sheep, if every sheep were not marked by a mark of the owner. So horses are branded in the croup; and in lands without ditches and with great herds of cattle, horned cattle in the horn.

Of itself slavery applied this also to people. When one man kept sometimes one hundred and more slaves, every time again the question rose *whose a slave was*, and then for all practical purposes it seemed safest, to burn the name or the mark of his master on the body, sometimes even on the forehead of the poor slave. Less painfully the sailor does this still, by tattooing an anchor with a proper mark on breast or arm. And when Justice still had lesser means at its disposal to identify a criminal, it adopted branding as an aid, by which surely and unmistakably to know one who had escaped from prison, or one who later on fell into its hands as an old offender. Now Bertillon has introduced in place of this *anthropometry*, i.e., the precise measurement and record of every prisoner. But the purpose in all this remains one, which is to have a mark, not on one's garment, nor

in his papers, but *on his person itself*, by which, in time of need, the person is *unmistakably identified*. A garment can be changed, papers falsified, but a mark *on the person himself* remains.

Of similar marks Scripture also makes mention. The Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him (Gen. 4, 15). A liberated slave, who chose to remain in his master's house, had his ear pierced. And also, what is of more significance, the seed of Abraham was circumcised in the foreskin, and so circumcision became a mark on the person himself of his solidarity to the people of God.

Symbolically this mark was put upon our forehead in Holy Baptism, whereby the name of God Triune, spiritualized, was written upon us. And of this symbol the reality will be ushered in on the illustrious day of the Lord, when on the forehead of the victor Christ shall write the name of His God, the name of the city of His God, and his own new name. So Aaron bore about his forehead "the golden plate, the crown of holiness" (Ex. 39, 30) on which was graven: *Holiness to the LORD*.

If now the victor "shall be a pillar in the temple of his God," of itself his priestly honor joins itself to this, now no longer by a gravure on a golden plate, but expressed in his own being itself: *This one belongs to Jehovah, fellow citizen of the New Jerusalem, the property of Christ*.

YET, every one feels, there is here no external writing intended. Every symbol is for this earthly dispensation.

Here, where there is no holiness, the symbol comes to lift us up to it, to remind us of it. But then also where the holiness will be full reality, the symbol of itself falls away.

Be, however, on your guard, that with the falling away of the symbol, you do not lose the *thing* itself.

One may say: "Truly, by manner of speech, he who compares the angel-face of a devout believer with the face of a villain, finds the expression of the holiness of God in these pious features," but then you remove the *reality itself*.

The fact here is, that not now, but on the day of His glory, Christ shall write the Threefold Name upon the forehead of him who overcame. This mark also belongs to the tokens of honor, which shall be the heavenly part of the child of God, who shone with victory in the struggle with Satan, sin and world. He obtains this; no one else; but he obtains it then in such a way, as he did *not* have it before, and then *receives* it, and therefore now possesses it, never more to lose it.

Thus there is mention of something glorious, which now even the holiest still lacks, and it only comes, not immediately after death, but on the day when Jesus' glory is ushered in.

Then, but also only then, comes the Tree of Life, and the Manna which is hidden, and the white stone, and the fine white linen raiment, and the sign of the Morning Star, and so likewise the bearing of Jehovah's holy Name, without engravure, in one's being itself.

It is the wage, it is the crown, it is the lustre that will shine out from the victor; and to that lustre will also belong the realization of the symbol of Holy

Baptism, so that all the angels of God and all the blessed read on us *the Name of the Lord*.

THE "Name of the Lord" is the *revelation* of His Divine Being. From the creature comes up the name of the Lord, even as the splendor of colors comes up from the objects on which the sun casts his beams. The sun beams forth white light, and only when the lightbeam breaks through the cloud, the colors and tints of the rainbow exhibit themselves. So is God a light. But only when this light from God beams in His creation, the creature spells His Holy Name. With a name there is a *namer*, and he who here *names* the Name of the Lord, is the creature. Not *every* creature, but the being created after the image of God. It is man who must make the name of his God "ever greater." And he names that Name, that Name he praises, that Name he makes to resound in its glory, not from himself, but when and for so much as God reveals Himself *in*, reveals Himself *to* him.

God sends out the light of His Being in and for us, And when in us that lightbeam breaks, come the tints, glow the colors, and when we spell and lovingly express this, resounds the Name of the Lord in His creation. From Him, but in and through us having come to a *name*.

So by His revelation God writes His reflection in His creation; but only in the *expression* of our creaturely being this reflection becomes a *name*.

Therefore David jubilates in Psalm 8: "O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is Thy Name in all the earth."

Thus also in an uninhabited island. But only when a man who knows God, puts his foot ashore of that island, does the Name of the Lord come to *expression* there.

So is God's Name already now in His saints. In their heart, in their consciousness, in their prayer, in their self-sacrifice, in their homesickness after the Fatherland above; but in all still imperfectly, of sound impure and incomplete. From the sinful atmosphere of our heart there always draws a film before it. And also, even though spiritually we sink away full of blessedness in that Name, our being itself hides that Name rather than that it should express that Holy Name.

A sapphire, in the light of the sun, gloriously reflects the blue of heaven back to heaven, *when it is cut*.

But before and otherwise not.

The still *uncut* sapphire does not glisten, but hides the blue of heaven in its uncertain dullness.

BUT once for us, too, comes the state of glory, when the fullness of outshining grace, which was *imprinted* in us, also in perfect purity will be *expressed* by us.

This waits our second incarnation, our new incorporation, when the separated and bodyless soul obtains her body back again.

Not the caterpillar which went into the grave, but the butterfly with its wealth of colors and lines. As our dead, and we, shall once look, as Jesus looks already now, and as John saw Him on Patmos.

And then with all of us, what is *in* us, shall come to *expression*. To expression in our eye, to expression

in our facial features, to expression in all our pure and heavenly-chaste, beautiful appearance.

Then we shall not be, as now, sometimes wooden, and then once again full of expression, but undisturbably *full* of expression. And that expression shall not be at one time pious, and then again ordinary, but *always* holy. Nothing shining in our heart, save *light from God*, and nothing expressed in all the tints and lines of our appearance, save the *Name of the Lord*.

Then at last shall be reached and consummated what God aimed at when He created us; and every one of the redeemed will also externally reveal nothing save His glory, but each in his own way. Each saint an enrichment of the revelation of God's Holy Name.

And this shall not take place of itself. It will be a work of art on the part of Jesus. It is He Who will make our body like unto His own glorious body.

He the Divine sculptor Who shapes us, ever more delicately forms us, until ever more of God is expressed upon and in our being. And when finally that expression becomes perfect and heavenly pure, the promise shall have been fulfilled, that upon us He wrote *the Name of our God*.

“To Sit in My Throne”

THE *throne* symbolizes *dominion*, and so as last and highest honor *this* also is promised to him, who in this spiritual struggle overcomes, that, when once the realm of glory is ushered in, he shall sit with Christ in His throne.

That this highest honor is ascribed to the church of Laodicea, does not mean in the least, as speaks for itself, to limit this most illustrious honor to Laodiceans. Also this richest promise applies to the redeemed at large. Does it not follow immediately after: “He that hath an ear, let him hear, what the Spirit saith unto the churches”? Yet here too there is connection between this highest token of honor and the Laodicean faint-heartedness. Never is the struggle more difficult, and consequently victory more precarious, than where you live amid the luke-warm and irresolute. The cross of persecution weighs heavily, but stimulates at the same time to resistance. A bald revelation of sin as under Jezebel is dangerous, but by reaction impels one to lead a quiet and holy life. But what wears, without ever stimulating, is, when there is never a spring that is pressed down, and faint-heartedness became the tone of life. Then there is nothing that supports and carries you. Then every impulse must waken from your own faith. And therefore, he who then perseveres, and goes on, and overcomes, overcomes unto the end, he has

fought the toughest fight, he has been most painfully martyred, as hero of the faith he precedes the others.

Now to obtain a part in kingly honor and royal dominion among us is unthinkable, but it was far from rare in the East. Did not Pharaoh have Joseph clothed in royal apparel, and was not power given him over all Egypt? Do we not read in Esther (6, 8) that the elect of the king should be clothed in the garment which the king used to wear, and that the royal crown should be placed upon his head? Is it not told of Daniel, how Belshazzar promised him similar royal honor? Did not David sing of Messiah how God had declared to Him: "Sit at my right hand (i.e., upon My throne) until I make thine enemies thy footstool"? In brief, was the Grand-vizier, who actually exercises all power and enjoys honor as the king himself, not throughout the entire East the ruler to whom every one looked?

For this reason the sitting of Jesus as King at God's right hand seemed strange to no one in the days of the apostles, and even the inquiry what then remained of the Kingship of God Himself, was raised by no one.

Only, what Christ received, exceeded in one particular all Eastern honor of court. Pharaoh gave Joseph all power over land and people, and even the royal palace, but he added: "only in the throne will I be greater than thou" (Gen. 41, 40). But even that throne God has appointed His Anointed.

The exalted Mediator sits with the Father *in His throne*. And sitting in that throne He continues the prayer: "Father, I will that where I am, there they will be with me, whom Thou hast given me"; and it is to this prayer that the promise brings the Amen: Even as

I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne, so also in the day of my glory shall you sit with me in my throne (Rev. 3, 21).

OF course with this it comes to the grant of power and dominion. Of a visible throne there can here be no mention. For do not forget, that this honor is accorded to *all* the blessed. He who did not overcome, but succumbed, does not enter into blessedness. And what a lifeless mock-representation it would be, to imagine Jesus seated on a throne, which afforded room for all God's elect, innumerable as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the sea-shore.

The throne here is symbol. Symbol of power, of dominion and majesty.

Yet it is not the “*power over the Heathen*” that had been promised before. And neither does it refer to the *judging* power, of which Jesus said to the apostles, that they would sit with Him on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19, 28), and of which St. Paul declared that “the saints shall judge the world and “the angels” (1 Cor. 6, 2, 3).

All the Patmos promises to the victor presuppose that the judgment is ended, and refer to the glory, which *afterward* waits to be revealed.

What then is this honor, this highness, this lustre of the dominion promised here? Also for this mystery the key lies in Paradise.

In Paradise the child of man created after the image of God, and therefore and by reason of it the word spoken to him in Paradise: Have dominion. That

would have been the sitting with God in His throne, clothed with royal power over the whole creation.

Priest and Prophet, but *also King* by the grace of God was man, in the image of God created.

That dominion man did then reject, did not desire, trod under foot, and at Satan's whisper reached after another dominion, after a power over against and above God.

So the king became slave, slave of sin, slave of Satan, slave of the world, slave of his own desires and ways.

For this it is that in this dispensation, also in the way of salvation it remains and must remain: not *rule*, but *serve*. Christ Himself Who appears before us, does not come to rule, but to give His soul for a ransom.

The unconverted a slave. The one converted to God willingly wills nothing else than *serve*.

And this continues, and this keeps on, until the Image of God shall be altogether restored, after soul and body.

But then it also turns.

Then he who was slave becomes master, who willingly served is called to dominion, and then all the blessed will wear the "crown of life," and sit with the Mediator in His throne.

AND then the choir of the blessed sings a new song, on golden cithern, to the Lamb, saying: Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, *and we shall reign as kings on the earth*.

All the endless creation, with its elements, its pow-

ers, its bewildering wealth, subjected to God's elect, who are then redeemed in Christ, bearing the Image of God also in its majesty.

All that is in heaven and earth, restored in its organic unity and in its original coherence united under spiritual superior power. God eternally along two ways glorifying Himself in His Creation. First immediately, insofar as He upholds all things by the word of His power. But also mediate, by man, by the creature with His Image, and that man dominating the whole Creation, not with difficulty, but of himself, by his spiritual overhighness, and thus consecrating unto God His creation as an offering with thanksgiving and in worship.

In Christ everything is "gathered together" again, or as it reads literally: organically articulated again under one head. And so literally the blessed sitting with Christ in His throne. For it is one power, it is one dominion, the immediate almightiness whereby God Himself carries all things, and woven therein the mediate dominion in and by men, whereby the whole creation becomes an offering unto God.

THAT with the blessed there will also be power over Satan, is hereby not denied; yet here it is not mentioned. That power is implied with the power over the Heathen or the heathen nature.

That with the blessed there will also be power of higher grace of one over the other, speaks of itself. In every organism the finer organ exercises power over the weaker. Yet of this also there is here no mention.

That power lies expressed in the special position of the apostles and of the four-and-twenty elders. But that can not be intended here, since the power in question here is accorded to *all* the blessed, and that other is just given to one to be exercised over the other.

No, what this sitting with Jesus in the throne promises, is to be King with Jesus; and Scripture itself interprets this as being a king *on earth*, a king over creation, a return of the glory of Paradise, and that glory of Paradise carried up to yet greater splendor.

And whether this dominion of victors does not take away from the dominion of God?

Surely not, for theirs is no dominion, save that which rests in the being conformed again to the Image of the Son, i.e., after the Image of God, so that it is not man in himself, but the reflection of God, which shines out in the blessed, to which such royal might and such kingly dominion is awarded.

“Arrayed in Fine Linen, Clean and White”

IN the mysteries of Patmos “pure and shining fine linen” is not intended as woven material by measure, to be taken actually, really, but as symbol taken from material life, was meant to set forth in glowing beauty a *spiritual quality*.

That clean fine linen means the clean fine garment of the soul. So it even reads, for it follows at once: “This fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints” (Rev. 19, 8). Something wherewith meanwhile the emphasis does *not* fall upon the *fact* of justification, but on the fruit, on the outcome, on the result of it in “now being forever rid of all guilt and sin.”

You know, indeed, that the angels of God, which fell, are not susceptible of justification, and that those angels of God which continued faithful to their God, need no justification. And yet in Rev. 15, 6 we do not find it written of redeemed sinners, but of seven angels before God’s throne: “They came out of the temple clothed in pure and white (shining) linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.”

Even as Jesus Himself had said of those who have blessedly fallen asleep: “They are as the angels of God in heaven,” so they are likewise as the angels of God in their garment of light; which symbolizes and indicates, that, leaving us, and through the gate of death entering heaven, they leave behind them in this world, everything that is sin or to which sin cleaves, in order from now on,

immune from all sin, to fulfill their blessed entrance into the Father-house.

Here is the mystery. How is this shaking off of sin done? In what way is this "dying unto sin" to be explained? What takes place, is a cutting of the tie, of the rootlets which held our heart in fellowship with sin; but *how* is the cutting through of that tie and of those rootlets to be understood?

It is mostly passed by with a glance. With the statement of the fact one deems to have done enough.

And until a short time ago this seemed to be so. No one of us doubted, but that until the latest breath the soul was held fast by those rootlets; and no one doubted also but that in heaven every tie that bound us to sin was unthinkable. Thus dying unto sin was bound to take place *in ictu mortis*, i.e., in the very moment of dying.

Yet also at this point from the ethical side doubt entered in. Mention began to be made of a preaching to conversion after death. Even voices were raised, to renew the use of the sacraments after death. So it was accepted, that also through death sin went with us.

Something over against which the perfectionist held, that one dies unto sin, or at least could die unto sin, long before his call to the better world.

So the "dying unto sin" at the last breath came to be pushed from two sides. And the question, what that "dying unto sin" in dying really is, thereby pressed itself upon us with the more stress.

THE answer to this question nearest at hand, most ready, most commonly given seeks that dying unto sin in the

separation of the body. And it can not be denied, that Paul's exclamation: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" seems to favor this short and simple answer.

Such saying seeks the seat of sin in the *flesh*. And since death separates the soul from the body, and changes the body once so strongly stimulated to sin into a helpless corpse, it seems of itself to be explained, that the separated soul, which itself is indeed pure spirit, is forever dead unto sin.

Especially they, whose heart was most open to sensual sin, say with their whole heart *yea* and *amen* to this. Their body, their flesh and blood, have all their lifelong played with them the rôle of temptress. By that sin Satan entered every time into their soul. In their best moments they have hated and cursed their own flesh and blood. And now forever to be rid of the body, and be pure spirit with God, that indeed must separate sin from them and them from sin. And, therefore, this short saying is enough for them, further thought they have none.

And yet, this *can* not be true.

For confess, does not the source of sin lie in Satan? Has it not come to us from Satan? Is not Satan pure *spirit* by creation, never to be anything else than *spirit*? And does not this show, that you also, when presently you have become pure spirit, by itself and nothing more, can very well yet in your heart be open to sin?

Moreover, as man you are not destined, after your death to remain without body unto the end.

The promise indeed reads, that "the hour cometh, when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth" (John 5, 28),

and also, that "Christ shall then change our humiliated body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3, 21).

Were now the body your enemy, with what anxious forebodings must the idea fill you, that presently that body returns? And how in that case everything within you should compel you to desire, that you might endlessly remain simple spirit, sheer, pure spirit.

THUS evil should have to hide not in your body as such, but in your *sinful body*.

But a sinful body, what else is this than taking the body again in connection with your in sin pending soul?

OR would you say, that the sinfulness of the body hides in the *humiliated* body? But do you not know, that your Savior has taken that same *humiliated* flesh and blood, and that in spite of this He has known *no sin*?

Is not, moreover, *sin* from its very nature something *spiritual*? And when you seek sin in the sinful body, do you not then make something material of it? The antidote indeed with respect to material evil lies in *medicine*, but for spiritual evil in *grace*. The Manichean, who in his foolishness denied this, sought the antidote against sin therefore in herbs and plants. At that viewpoint altogether correct. But this can not be your viewpoint. You do not *eat* against sin, but you *pray* against sin. And also, when mention is made of the eating of

the Son of man and of the drinking of His blood, you do not understand this Capernaum-like of the eating with the mouth, but of an eating with the mouth of faith.

And also, you well know other sins save voluptuousness, drunkenness and vanity. Is there no pride and ambition, and defiance, and envy, and hatred, and anger, and unmercifulness, and unbelief, and flouting the love of the Father? And when all these terrible sins do not cleave in the flesh but drive their root fibers deep down in the spirit, what then avails it by itself, whether you are already rid of your flesh and blood?

There is one sin that can *not* be forgiven, the deliberate and conscious slander of the Holy Ghost. Is this a sin of the senses, or is not this most dreadful sin a purely spiritual sin, altogether outside of the body? How then can dying unto sin ever be taken as the mere separation from the flesh, when the spirit, when the soul, when your inner man, *remained as it was when you died?*

Confess, when Jesus came in touch with sensual sin with man or woman, did He not always drop the balsam of His Divine compassion into the wound, even in the case of the woman taken in adultery? And on the other hand is not His *woe unto you!* directed against those who were haughty of heart, and against those who imagined themselves just, who Pharisee-like took their stand against Him? And hypocrisy, is that sin of the body, or is it sin of the soul?

THERE is still something else.

They who talk about this deep mystery of dying,

are full-grown, mostly men and women of years, if not aged and full of days. But dying is the same for all, and by far the most die away from this life, before they have reached this advanced time of life. Thousands upon thousands die in the cradle and even before they were put in the cradle.

What temptation of the senses has an infant of a few days or weeks known? What sin has such a fading and early disappearing baby committed in flesh and blood? And what difference does it make to such a little creature dying in its early hour of being that its little soul is separated from its still altogether undeveloped little body, and for such a wight how could that be *the dying unto sin*?

Also in this you feel, that this dying unto sin must have a far deeper significance. No, it can not be a dying unto our conscious sins, a dying unto our committed sins, a dying unto those actual sins, which held us captive. In that case "dying unto sin" could only be possible with those who are older of days.

It must be not a dying unto *these sins*, but unto sin as power, as poison, as venom of soul.

It must be the lifting out of our whole being from the sphere of sin.

It can not be the loosening of the tie between soul and body, which presently is laid again.

It must be grace. An act of almighty grace. A grace that consummates our sanctification.

*“He That Overcometh Shall Inherit
All Things”*

WHAT on Patmos Jesus called out to John was a call to arms, a call to battle. It must be *struggle, battle* to the end. And then there will be peace, O surely, but *only then*. Not until the end has come. “He that overcometh,” he shall be honored with brightness and be enriched with every blessing of salvation. But whether you overcame or succumbed, is only decided for every one of us at our dying, and the tokens of victory will be handed out to us, not immediately after our dying, but only in that illustrious day, when Christ returns upon the clouds, and *this* world passes away, and the *new* earth under the *new* heaven shall praise God eternally.

This is what the whole Revelation on Patmos impresses so deeply upon us. The world as it now is, is permeated by sin, and as we personally go into death, the world also shall once go into death together with all her nature-wealth, with all her splendid development, with all what in the course of centuries she has brought forth and from her womb shall still bring forth. “This world passes away, and the lust thereof.” But . . . as for us, who are of Christ, also in and through dying there is a continuance of our *being*, and that hidden being shall once rise from the dead, so there is regeneration, so there is resurrection also for the world. She goes into death, all things go into death, but once Christ shall make all things *new*.

This world passes away, but a new world comes. And this depends on Christ. Were He to let go of her, she would forever sink away in death, and continue in death. And that once she shall come forth again new in the lily whiteness of purity, with the flush of eternal youth upon her face, and then shall glisten in incorruptibility and glory, is because the Word became *flesh*, because God's Only Begotten Son became *man* and because He is appointed of the Father as *Head* of our human race, and *in His saints* has personally united that race to Himself.

So the world passes away, she goes into death, but Jesus holds her fast, by His Incarnation and in His saints, and this shall once be the triumph when Christ, with His saints, in that regenerated world shall reign in glory.

This of course applies only to those who belong to Jesus, have been incorporated in Jesus, have become partners with Him in a common lot.

To draw you away from Jesus, is the awful design of the prince of the world. To make you hold fast to Jesus, is the Divine drawing and the ministry of God's angels.

Away from Jesus, or forever bound to Jesus, that is the battle, life's combat, the struggle.

He who in dying is thus securely anchored to Christ, that he can no more be loosed, is the victor, his is the soul that has overcome, and to him Jesus whispers still in his dying: *He that overcometh, shall inherit all things* (Rev. 21, 7).

LET it not surprise you, that by His revelations on Patmos Jesus impresses so definitely, and with such penetrating seriousness that character of *combat* and of *struggling* upon the whole existence of His saints upon earth.

The danger of choosing peace rather than strife, is so menacing to God's children, and when herein they once move amiss, the spirit from the abyss abuses their very thirst after peace, unobservedly to unravel the tie of their heart to Jesus, and make the prize of the victor, the crown of life to be lost by them.

Combat is a hard necessity, the homesickness of our soul continues to go out after peace. David is a transition. Only in Solomon comes peace.

Once shall all struggle be ended, and it will be peace, rest, Sabbath in God eternally.

But woe to him, who reaches after that peace, before the battle shall have been fought. And yet the devout mind inclines so readily, to draw itself back from the turmoil of battle; withdrawn from the world to shut oneself up in some holy retreat; to be indifferent to the honor of victor; and to want by way of some quiet bypath, apart from the combat of spirits, to enter heaven.

And yet, this were the same as though Jesus had quietly remained in Nazareth, and had evaded the struggle unto death. This were a Bethlehem without Golgotha. This were playing with an holy ideal, and avoid what must realize that ideal.

Therefore Jesus declared to His disciples already before His dying with so great emphasis: "I am *not* come to bring peace on the earth, but the sword." And for this reason this same Jesus on Patmos warned once again all His saints against peace too hastily claimed,

called them to a struggle, which could not cease until the end should come, and impressed it upon them even seven times, that peace should once come down from heaven, but that that peace could only be the portion of him *who overcame*, i.e., of him who had persevered in the combat until his dying day and had stood true in battle until his latest breath.

THE church militant on earth seeks the spiritual field of battle *from duty*, from stress of *conviction*, because the conflict is *laid upon her*, because not to fight would be cowardly betrayal and denial of Jesus. And Jesus knows that duty and conviction, to be of avail, call for inspiration, and only by enthusiasm work wonders.

He who runs in a race feels his exhausted strength stimulated to new effort, when he thinks of the crown of honor that awaits the victor.

Therefore, even in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus constantly points to the reward that comes, when God shall recompense to us in public every alms and every prayer.

Jesus Himself in His humanity was carried in His conflict with death by looking to the crown, that awaited Him as Conqueror. Was it not foretold the Messiah already in Isaiah 53, 10: "When he shall have made his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Oh, understand Jesus' conflict *humanly*.

Did it not resound on Patmos: "He that overcometh, *even as I also overcame*, and am set down with

my Father in his throne"? Think also of that deep word: "The corn of wheat which falls into the ground and dies, brings forth fruit" (John 12, 24).

To inspire His saints, to hearten their courage to persevere, to stimulate their enthusiasm, Jesus has portrayed them in the image of the Victor, and promised them sevenfold reward and honor.

Figurative language, if you will. In forms borrowed from earthly splendor of victory and coronation. But even so figurative language full of ecstatic reality. As no victorious general on earth was ever crowned, so shall the least of His brethren, in the presence of the angels of God, once be honored, fêted, decorated and coronated before the face of his God. No honor where-with Christ Himself is crowned, which shall not reflect upon him. Nothing shall be held back from him. He that overcometh shall inherit *all* things.

Do you ask, whether all this apart from struggle, and *without* victory, can not be the part of all God's elect; since no one can pluck them out of the Father's hand; then see here the answer. For God's elect everything is foreordained, thus foreordained also that they will fight on to the end; also that to the end they will overcome. And thus also that the reward and the crown which Jesus holds before His saints, is the means ordered of God, to stimulate them to the fight, to enable them to maintain their stand in that fight, and in that fight to crown them with victory and glory.

*“The Riches of the Glory of His Inheritance in
the Saints”*

THERE is what Scripture calls: “*the age to come*,” which is ushered in when Christ returns. And there is “*this age*,” referring to all time, that precedes the return of Jesus. You find both together in this one saying of the Savior, that the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, “*neither in this age, neither in the age to come*” (Matt. 12, 32, Dutch version).

Thus these two ages form two spheres, spheres for our life and spheres for our thought. On one side the world round about us; but far excelling this the world which is with God, and which also here below shall once supersede this old, passing world.

To an unbeliever there is no confusion about this. To him there is only “this world” and “this age.” But a child of God lives simultaneously in these *two* worlds and in these *two* ages; and to inlive and inthink himself *in these two at the same time* is something, to which he is enabled by grace alone.

Only by special grace do these two come with him in pure *balance*.

Mostly, however, that grace is lacking.

So, among the children of God you find on one hand those, who richly and fully inlive in this world, not in sinful but nobler sense; yet know scarcely anything of inliving in the “age to come” and in “the coming world of glory.” They know that that age and that

world are to come, but postpone inliving in it to a later date.

Others, on the other hand, among God's children fall into the opposite onesidedness. They close their eyes as much as possible to this world, almost exclusively to engage themselves with the "coming age." In the cloister, which shuts one off altogether from this world, this effort and this tendency find their consummation.

Balance is neither with the first nor with the second. Rather with both the balance is altogether out of equipoise. With the first the scale of *this* age is too low, and that of the age to come too high. With the other again the scale of this world is altogether out of sight, and only the scale of the world *to come*, before their eyes.

Such is the case with many now, and so it threatened to become already in the church of Ephesus when Paul was still alive. And therefore Paul writes to this church, that day by day he prays for the saints at Ephesus, that this special grace might be imparted unto them, that not merely they might dwell in this world after God's holy will, but at the same time obtain such "enlightened eyes of understanding," as to have a clear and perspicuous insight into "what is the hope of their calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (1, 18).

This prayer of the apostle should continually ascend from the church unto God. It should unceasingly be our own prayer.

For this special grace is indispensable to every one of us, and this grace also God imparts to his saints only, when they pray for it, with groanings of heart, continuously.

"THE hope of his calling" does not refer to the call to faith and conversion. To this voice of your God's calling you gave a hearing, when you believed and converted yourself. The calling of God here in question extends much further. He, your God, is in glory, you are on earth, and now God calls you away from this world to His world, from your insunkenness to His glory, from "this age" with its misery to the "age to come" with its riches and glory.

Thus to this calling there is a *prospect* attached. The prospect of a state of perfect happiness. And of obtaining and acquiring of that state of happiness this call of your God gives you *hope*.

Not an *uncertain* hope, which perchance *will* and perchance will *not* be fulfilled, but a fixed, unquestionable, certain hope, which guarantees perfect fulfilment. Thus "the hope of his calling" means: the perfect, unshakable certainty of the state of happiness, that awaits you.

Yet this state of happiness is not your part here. Foretaste you may enjoy of it, but the salvation, that comes, is as yet an inheritance, which truly and surely awaits you, but it is still as an *inheritance*, in possession of which you only come later on.

Already here on earth, however, it is something quite different, whether you are merely told, that an inheritance is apportioned you, or whether at the same time you are told, *how great* that inheritance is, and *wherein* it consists.

Only this last information renders you, if it is a rich inheritance, rich already now in your mind.

So the apostle wills, that you, as child of God, not only shall know, that you are an heir, and that some

time you surely will obtain the inheritance, but also wherein that inheritance consists. And therefore he wants you to know: "What is the riches of the glory of that inheritance," how overwhelmingly great and all expectation excelling it is, so that the knowledge of the riches of that inheritance, which is coming to you, may already here render you blessed with respect to your feeling.

And of this joy of hope and of this already in advance being rich in the knowledge of the coming inheritance, he now says, that it must live, and can live, only "*in the saints.*"

For them alone that inheritance is. They alone receive the promise of it. In them alone can there arise the real representation of it.

But then also in them, in *all* God's saints, that hope, that foretaste must live. He who as child of God, does not know that hope, that foretaste, lives beneath his station as child of God; undervalues the work of God's grace; and sins against the compassions and the love of God, Who from pure grace provided all this for him.

HE who fell asleep in Jesus, did not therefore go at once from the darkness here below into the eternal light.

There was for him a gradual transition.

First he knew only *this* world, in which by the Common grace of God, there was still, O, so much beauty, so much attractiveness, so much nobility, so much of good report, but which with all its beauty was ever swathed with an atmosphere of sin and of suffering.

Then in the hour of his conversion a window was opened to him, through which at once he obtained an outlook upon an entirely different world, incomparably richer and more beautiful, and especially, so glorious because there is no sin in it to stain it, and no suffering, to make the flower fade on its stem.

Yet after his conversion, if left to himself, he would not have been able to embrace these two in his outlook simultaneously. He would either have taken his stand at this open window, that, forsaking this world, he might look continually upon those gleamings of the eternal,—or, returning to his world, he would have neglected that other world, upon which the opened window afforded outlook.

But then *that* particular grace was also given him, that God the Lord united both for him, and gave him an eye, temporarily in *this* world to admire the greatness of his God and under that impression to serve his God, and also, not merely to look into the other world, but to live in it, and already here to be rich in the wealth of the inheritance that awaited him.

And this then has gone on and on. With an ever more even balance. With an ever clearer representation. With an ever more deeply rooting expectation. Strong in this world, and at the same time inspired and charmed by the world which was to come.

Till finally also *his* hour struck, that by a new call, God called him altogether away from this world, and by way of beginning, the glory of the age to come disclosed itself to him.

YET even so there awaits him still a new, a last transition.

In dying is not yet the consummation. That consummation only comes in the "consummation of the ages" when once all antithesis falls away, and "this age" and "this world" pass away, now to be taken up into glory.

Then, says the Scripture, "the holy city, the new Jerusalem, comes down from heaven, adorned as a bride arrayed for her husband." Something which of course does not mean to say, that then from heaven a city with streets and gates and ramparts comes out of the clouds. But this, that the chaos, which shall ensue after the world conflagration, shall be created and formed anew, and shall be made into a more glorious, holier world, far excelling all form and splendor of this world. And that this glorious appearance shall not come forth from the earth itself, but from above, by God, and forms, like unto heavenly forms, shall be imprinted upon it.

The external shall then perfectly correspond to the internal. The glory without to the glory within. The glory, which shall then surround God's saints, shall be one with, and after the standard of, the inner blessedness. See God face to face with the eye of the soul, and admire the full, clear reflection of God's majesty with the eye of the body. Pure outbeaming to without of what gleams with untarnished gold in the soul.

The riches of the glory then no more an inheritance, but an appropriated possession, with full, free enjoyment. Not alone the glory, but the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

Already now they who have fallen asleep in Jesus,

the whiles they dwell in the Father-house, carry the prophecy of that glory about with them in the soul. Already they have glimpses of it. Only what they still miss is the rise of this sun of "the age to come" above the horizon. And that only comes, when Christ comes and shall triumph, and all His saints with Him.

“*A Rest for the People of God*”

ON tombstones in olden times, mostly at the foot, the familiar Q.I.P. used to be chiseled. They were the first letters of the three Latin words: *Quiescat In Pace*, which mean: *That he (or she) may rest in peace.*

What idea do you attach to *that rest*? What sense has it for you, that after your dying *the rest* awaits you? What do you understand by it, that he who from your home or circle dies away in Jesus, has entered into the *eternal rest*?

With the early fading of a newly given darling, which had known little else of the world than the cradle and mother's lap, you have no impression of this. Even with the dying of an older child, which already made acquaintance with the playworld and the schoolworld, that idea of *rest* has nothing in it that appeals to you. For a child his rest is his sleep, and provided he is well and strong, he never rests otherwise, but is always active, always busy, bubbling over with exuberant life.

Also of a “Sunday child,” as he used to be called, who was always prosperous, who never knew cares nor sorrows, whose calm and carefree life ran along like an even stream, and who after a rich and happy life, in good old age, quietly fell asleep in his Savior, you have no idea of his *rest* that grips you.

If, on the other hand, a wrestler dies away from your midst, who all his life long had been harrowed by disasters and cares, and who under the load of his

griefs and difficulties every time seemed to succumb, yes, then at his grave it is to you a blessed thought, a glorious thought, that at last his trials and sufferings are ended, and that with the grave for him there began the eternal rest.

And yet, also at such a grave the rest, which remaineth for the people of God, in its real significance and depth is not grasped.

For yes, that rest also implies, that the chase of life now ceases, and the burden of life falls from the shoulders, and sorrow and trouble are forever ended, when God Himself shall wipe away the last tear from your eyes; but yet this is not all.

With God the weariness of heart also counts. Jesus portrays it so touchingly: "Now Lazarus is comforted, and thou art tormented" (Luke 16, 25). But yet, there is implied in that rest for the people of God infinitely more.

ALREADY he who knows the fight *with sin*, appreciates this.

That fight also is not equally bitter for all. With this fight also there is a deadly terrible center, and around it the wide circumference. Finally even an outermost circumference. And according as God has appointed you your place either in the heat of that battle, or farther away from it, or in that outermost region, you have known the life and death struggle with Satan, sin and the world, the restlessness in the broad ranks of battle, or only little more than the noise in the distance.

But violent, ordinary or faint, the fight with sin

has some time wearied every soul. The driver, who never let go. The afterthroes of earlier slavery, which ever remained sensitive. The disappointments following your ever trying anew, to rid yourself of your bosom sin. Always that unrest of conscience. That dissatisfaction with and regarding yourself every evening, when you were on your knees before God, anew.

Your Catechism applies to this weariness of soul the Sabbath commandment. Your spiritual Sabbath: a “ceasing from your evil works,” and thus, already here below a beginning of the eternal Sabbath, i.e., of the eternal rest.

The blood of the Cross brings him, who believes, in and after conversion, *peace*. “We then, who are justified by faith, have peace with God” (Rom. 5, 1). But not yet *the rest*. The battle, the trials go on even after conversion. “Not as though I have already apprehended, but that I might apprehend it” (Phil. 3, 12).

He that *overcometh*, *overcometh* in the battle *after* his conversion, he shall inherit all things.

He that shall have overcome unto the end, for him is the eternal rest.

Then *never* more the driver, *never* more the temptation.

Sin which here always pursues us, and entices us in its snares, up yonder forever disarmed.

There helpless, as here, alas, we stood so often helpless over against it.

AND yet, even this gives you no clear view of the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

In God's holy Word that eternal rest is drawn in a sharply outlined image.

It is always Israel in the wilderness, that shall find rest in the land of milk and honey. Israel that on account of his murmuring and apostasy is detained in the wilderness, and does not enter into the rest. Israel that after forty years penalty, in his generation renewed, by Joshua is led *into the rest*. And of this Israel it is said, that he enjoyed rest merely in the shadows of the symbol, for that the true Joshua is our Jesus, Who brings all people who believe and die in His fellowship, through the valley of the shadow of death into the eternal rest.

What does this refer to?

Surely not to the cares and difficulties of life, for Israel in the wilderness ate the "bread of the mighty," and drank from the rock, his clothing did not wear out, and his footgear did not perish. If ever a people lived carefree it was Israel in the wilderness.

Neither can you say, that in the wilderness temptation was strongest, for in the wilderness Israel wandered about *outside of the world* at large, tormented by no other temptation, than that which rose from his own heart.

So the rest for the people of God which is pictured to us in the expectation of Israel while wandering in the wilderness, has an altogether different significance.

It is the rest of the pilgrim, who finally has reached the goal of his long pilgrim journey; at last he is there; and now forever throws away staff and scrip.

He is in the Father-house.

The ideal has become real.

He *has* what consciously or unconsciously in the deepest prayer in his heart, he has so ardently desired.

Do you understand this transition? Between being *on the wing* and *at home*, between *desire* and *possession*, the always *becoming*, and eternal *being*.

God is never become, never becomes and never shall become. He is Jehovah. I shall be what I shall be. He is that Which He is.

But ours is the development, the unfolding, the *becoming*. Our existence, our life on earth is one process. Suckling, child, boy, youth, man, old man. It is all one ladder, with rounds without end, which we have to climb. Never at rest, always forward and farther. One journeying on, and on; what is arrived at, to leave behind, always again to go farther. Scarcely has the top been reached of the mountain ahead of us, but another yet higher mountain shows itself, and that too must again be climbed. Hence that training, ever learning, always being driven toward further knowledge, further light, higher power, richer comprehension.

Here rest is sin. Is squandering away one's life. Is standing still, while the way beckons farther and higher.

So it was in Paradise. Adam pure and holy, right before God and wise. But not to remain so. No, but to develop himself, spiritually to grow, to advance, and then, yea, then he, too, at last, when the course was run, would enter into the eternal rest.

Here restlessly wandering about in the wilderness. The lad wants to become youth, and, having become

youth, to become man is all his desire. And having become man, yea, what then? Desire to become an old man? No, not that. To become old is to go down, and the way beckons to higher.

Pilgrims to the eternal Fatherland, only up yonder is your Canaan. In the Father-house awaits you the eternal rest. When finally the *enduring* condition shall have been obtained. When the *becoming* shall have ended, and eternal *being* shall enter in. When you will be, what forever more you must remain to be.

There there is no more homesickness after higher, but at the highest top your tabernacle prepared for you by God, your incorruptible *habitation*, and therein your *being* having become unchangeable.

No climbing, but also no going down.

The pilgrim staff thrown aside, and you with your whole soul eternally rejoicing in the *rest* which God has prepared for His people.

“*The Things That Can Not Be Shaken*”

“**H**ERE below the *becoming*, once up above the *being*!” Have you ever, with strong anticipation, as in advance lived through the glory, which shines upon you in this “no more becoming,” but “eternal *being*”?

Our becoming here is our constant *changing*. On the way we travel, as the poet sang, there is no footstep that leaves a lasting print. All the present becomes past, though it be laid up against us.

And consider well, that restlessness of “becoming” is no punishment for sin. Surely, sin also affected for the worse that becoming, and decadence, and changing in a terrible way. Death and grave sufficiently show, what, as bitter result of sin, *becomes* at last of our person, of our life, of our sphere of activities, of our happiness, and of our earthly ideals.

So, *outside* of sin, it would not have been. By one man sin came into the world, and *by sin death*.

Yet, even without and outside of sin, in *this* dispensation there would have been constant change, the restless becoming, as part of our nature.

God created us in original righteousness, undoubtedly, and in that sense Adam had righteousness, holiness and wisdom. But he did not have this spiritual good, to remain what he was and where he was. He was called to something yet far higher and more glorious. That very transition from the paradise-state into the heavenly state was the mystery of the covenant of

works. He stood before the commandment, and by fulfilling that commandment he would attain unto what he not yet had; the eternal, not changing, enduring life. The stamp, which God Himself has put upon things here below, is what the Psalmist describes in these words: "Thou shalt *change* them, and they shall be *changed*."

Always *becoming*, never *being*. "Here no abiding city, but a seeking of one to come."

At mother's breast our eye opens itself. From child we become lad and youth. He who is youth, hastens to become man. And when we continue to be man, we become old. Presently stricken in years, we go into the grave. And that becoming and changing again in our years, is but the image of the restless changing, through which our whole existence hastens. Our training is *becoming*. Our whole experience of life is to form and ripen us. Every morning we awake, we are different again from what we were when we went to sleep. We grow, and from small become mature. Almost no feature on our face remains the same. Everytime different sensations, feelings, longings. Restless changing in our in- and outward existence. Sometimes even that changing in and about and around us, goes on so quickly and almost violently, that we become estranged from ourselves, and feel ourselves as it were driven by a driver, who never lets up.

Now all this anxiety in the processes of change is from sin. But even when you think this anxiety out of it, never being, but restlessly changing, would yet have been your portion upon earth.

Of course, there *is* something in you, your *ego*, your hidden being. The man who dies full of years, is

the same being, which once as infant by his mother was conceived.

But in his condition, in his manner of existence, in his life there was never anything else observable than *change*.

Compare the picture of the infant on mother's lap with the photograph of the old man, taken shortly before his death.

He *was* that infant, and also that aged man is *he*, but waxen old as a garment.

That is what Scripture calls: “the *change* of those things that are shaken” Hebr. 12, 27; and over against this the same Scripture puts “the things which can not be shaken.” The life above which is not changeable, the Divine-heavenly which never becomes, but eternally is, and therefore is called: *eternal life*.

A CLEAR and intelligent idea of what it implies, eternally to *be*, and never more to *become*, we can not form.

The language we speak, the representations we form, the ideas we put together, are all borrowed from *this* dispensation. And here on earth everything is subject to the law of change. The Lord is the Rock. But alongside the walls of that Rock the waters of life run restlessly on. Nature changes, the face of the heavens changes, history says, that always other things came. And therefore, what it is to *become*, we understand. But what *being* is, we do not understand.

In the burning bush God gave Moses a sight of it by miracle. What burns consumes. But see, the bush burned, and consumed *not*. It glittered in brightness of

glow, and yet it did not consume. That was *being*. And therefore that burning bush was symbol of the Lord's Holy Name: I AM THAT I AM, *Jehovah*, that God Who never *becomes*, but always *is*.

So also spake the Mediator. Not "before Abraham was, I *was*," but: before Abraham was, I *am*. To Him it was given to have life in Himself. And therefore, also in Him there is no *becoming*, truly after His human, but not after His Divine nature. In Him also the eternal *being*.

When the world was created and prepared, nothing more *became*. The world was there. And therefore the Sabbath then came in. For God's Sabbath is that *being*. Cessation of the labor of *becoming*.

And therefore the Sabbath is inshining of heavenly rest in the weariness of the endless *becoming* on earth.

He who so recognizes it, experiences already here on earth the beginning of the "eternal Sabbath."

But only by anticipation, by foretaste, by the forward reach.

The *eternal* Sabbath, rest from endlessly becoming, the blessedness of eternal *being* and *continuing*, belongs with the realm of glory, when nothing more shall change, and nothing more shall be shaken, when *becoming* is ended, and we enter into eternal *Being*.

ON the good understanding of this, depends already here the blessedness of *faith*, the wealth of enjoyment of what Scripture calls *grace*.

This glory is ciphered away in these times from

the Gospel of Jesus, and thereby the Gospel is rendered powerless.

Oh, that *Grace* might again be understood, as Scripture presents it and the fathers grasped it.

"I know that I *am* translated from death into life." "Justified by faith I *have* peace with God." Not: Ye *become*, but: "ye *are* holy through the word which I have spoken unto you." He whom He has foreordained, He has also justified; and whom He has justified, He *has* also glorified." "The inheritance is incorruptible, undefilable, unfadable." "He that is born of God, sins no more, and he *can* no more sin, for the seed of God *remaineth* in him." "We *have* redemption through His blood." Our life is not still to come, but *is* here, "with Christ hidden in God." Christ is "given us of God, as our wisdom, our justification, our sanctification, our redemption." We must not still receive all this, but we *have* all this; not still to come, but *is* ours now.

That is the Gospel.

But that Gospel even the so-called orthodox throw over. Of *being* in grace they have no more knowledge. Also in grace everything must *become*. Not in Christ *are* they sanctified, but by self-exertion they must *become* holy. They *are* not children of God, but they must gradually *become* God's children. And of course, they are not through with this before they die. And so they teach, that this *becoming* goes on on the other side of the grave.

The things that can *not* be shaken, they make shakable, and thereby the unrest of *this* world is carried over into heaven.

KEEP your soul far from that falsified Gospel. Things here and things in the hereafter are dominated by this absolute antithesis, that on earth things *become*, and that in the heavenly things *are*.

Thus also you, and also those, who, asleep in Jesus, went from you. Here change and always a becoming different, but there all this is ended. Then the pilgrim's journey is finished. Then on the home-course the bark has run into the haven of the eternal rest. Not presently to lift anchor again, and to be tossed about by storm and wind on angry waves, but never to set sail again, and eternally to remain where it is.

Yet even so you are not there yet.

It is not alone, that from a *shakable* world you have been transported into an *unshakable* world, but far more still, that then, with your person, with your heart, with the deepest depths of your whole inward existence, you yourself shall have ceased to *become*, never to know anything else than an eternal rest, an *eternal-being* in the Mediator.

“Forever Perfected”

IN your sanctified imagination do not transport the restlessness of this dispensation into the Father-house with God.

“*This* world passes away and the lust thereof,” and then there comes another, a better world, populated by no other children of men, than those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

But the “law of life” of this dispensation does *not* pass over into that new world. In this present world restless change itself is condition of existence; but in that new world dominates the law of *unchangeableness*. Here everything is in process of *becoming*, there nothing becomes and nothing decays, for there there dominates the majesty of eternal rest, the perfection of eternal permanence and being.

We can not enter into this, because with respect to our representation and thinking we are bound to this endless-changeableness, and because by reason of this an always permanent condition and a rest which is never broken, would impress us as something stifling and oppressive, yea, as deadly ennui.

This accounts for all our efforts to make life in heaven attractive by imagining ourselves and making others believe, that in heaven our forming and developing will unceasingly go on, and that in the new life we will forever go on progressing from glory to glory.

That endless effort after an ideal perfection, which

then of course is never reached, and that endlessly becoming more happy, without ever capturing perfect happiness, is then taken as a charming thought.

The *Excelsior* carried into heaven. *Evolution* also on the other side of the grave.

Yet this would be nothing else, than making life in the Father-house a lengthening-piece of life on earth.

Directly in contradiction with what Scripture reveals, that "all that is in part" goes under in dying, and that in the eternal life it shall be: Knowing as we are known, i.e., perfectly.

In contradiction likewise with this glorious fruit of the passion and death of our Lord, that by one offering *He hath perfected forever* all those, that go to God (Hebr. 10, 14).

THE *eternal* lies in the fact of no more changing. "*Eternal life*" is life that no more changes.

The *eternal* stands over against the *temporal*. And what is *time* other than the pulsebeat of the ever changing. Hours, days, weeks, months, years; always after evening morning, after day the night. But this is not so in the Father-house. "There there shall be no more night." Thus also no more morning. And sun and moon will be no more signs, for God and the Lamb will beam forth the eternal light, which neither changes nor is darkened.

Here is not-remaining, as one is, highest rule of life. He who each year he lives makes no advance, and climbs no higher, has trifled that year away. The sea-man hastens along on the waves, to reach the haven,

towards which he set his course; but as soon as the goods have been discharged, he escapes that haven again to seek wind and waves. And so we all do. We hanker after diversion and change. What always remains the same, stifles us by its monotony. Is not all our life a pilgrim journey? Always on and ever farther on. Hastening to the mile-stone, which in the distance discovered itself to our eyes, in order as soon as it is reached, to turn our back upon it, and to hasten toward the new mile-stone, which then comes. In the morning we press toward midday, that from midday we may hasten on to evening, and then to go into the night, which must bring us again the new morning.

Yet all this is foreign to eternity. Then no more pilgrims, but arrived in the Father-house, to remain there forever, without ever any more longing rising up in us after anything else. "Pillars" as Jesus says, "in the temple of our God, *never more to go out*" (Rev. 3, 12).

And can it be otherwise? Striving, trying, longing after more can not be thought to be endless, else the object one pursued would never, never be reached, and in heaven it would continue to be, what it was so long on earth: *never perfect*; never, never the eternal rest for the heart, which to the people of God is the highest good.

No, a going on of the development here begun can not be the life in the Father-house. In dying comes in between the grace-miracle of perfecting, the full unfolding at once of the flower bud, apart from degree or transi-

tion the entire ripening of the fruit of the offering of Christ. This is the dying unto sin, this is the being delivered from the body of this death, this is the transition from time into the eternal.

Therefore they who are in Christ Jesus are already here called "saints," already here "perfected."

Would you bring all the dissimilarity of life here over into the Father-house? Think, how many millions died away in the cradle, and would they have to begin their development, intellectual and spiritual, only in the Father-house? And the other millions and millions, whose development, thanks to their position in life, remained here on the lowest level, would you lead them into the Father-house in all their imperfectness, only there to appropriate to themselves, what a small circle of higher privileged ones already enjoyed here below? Thus, in the Father-house also, the here more finely formed, the here more richly developed a sort of heavenly nobility, and the great multitude which no one can number, as half under age round about them.

Would that be our only comfort, the only comfort also for those thousands and millions, in their life and death?

No, and again no, says God's Word; but this is the source of endless comfort and rest of soul, that our glorious High Priest by one offering hath *perfected* all them, that through Him go to God.

ARDENT and fervent longing, here to be relieved, and to enter into the Father-house, became ever less also in circles of believers. A heart-felt cry as of Paul: "Who

shall deliver me from the body of this death, I have a desire to be unbound and to be with Jesus,”—no more appeals to large companies of believers. One full of days, a worn-out sufferer on a bed of sickness, one persecuted by adversity upon adversity not counted, the outlook upon the future of heaven interests us far too little.

And yet, is it not natural, that thirst after the joy of heaven burns less in the soul, when one imagines, that there it will merely be continuation of what we here leave? A higher class, but of the same training school. Why not continue that task of our development a little longer here? Then for the time being we escape anxious death, and, we make equally good advances equally well.

Break with this false representation. Understand what dying unto sin is, what it is to be made *perfect*, what it is, from that endless chase to be transposed in the eternal rest of *Being*, wholly, altogether out of time to be placed in the midst of *eternity*, and this altogether independent of whether you die as child, or as man, or as one of great age,—and see, how suddenly that glorious Father-house appears before the eye of your soul in an altogether different light.

That Father-house the condition of perfectness, and perfect all whom you there shall find; and when you enter there, you also a perfected one among the perfect.

THE saints, who went before, also those whom God the Lord called away from our own heart, appear by that same light before us in so altogether different a form.

You lost a child, but now in the Father-house by a miracle of grace that child is at once forever perfect. Far, infinitely far above the holiest on earth in perfectness excelling. What here was still an uncut diamond, there a sparkling jewel, shining as a star in the firmament.

Or, when he whom from your own home God called to the Father-house, had come already here to higher development, but so that to the earthly image, to the earthly form the remembrance of our fall still cleaved, then in thinking of that brother, of that sister in the Father-house, all that was painful on earth, that was sadly unholy gone, and before you appears the holy and the glorious image of one in Christ perfected, not only without spot or wrinkle, but also in heavenly *perfectness*.

“*Now I Know in Part*”

HE who fell asleep in Jesus, *while the history of this world was still in process*, is not yet arrived, has not reached yet his final destiny, is still in expectation of things to come, and for him the entrance upon the consummated rest still tarries.

When the fifth seal was opened (Rev. 6, 10) John saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and they cried with a loud voice: How long, O Lord, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood? And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season.

He who departed in peace, is truly in heaven, but every tie to this world is therefore not yet broken. Here also it applies: “That they without us should not be made *perfect*” (Hebr. 11, 40).

Everything waits for “the manifestation of the glory of the children of God” (Rom. 8, 18-22), and that does not come, until the history of this world is ended. The church, which already now triumphs above, remains partner in a common lot with the church still militant on earth.

Continuance of earthly relationship with our dead there is not. These relationships were for this world, and they who fell asleep are in heaven as “angels of God.” But what remains is the *spiritual* relationship, the brotherhood in Christ. No more our child, our father,

our husband, our wife, but fellow-child of God, our brother, our sister in Christ.

When you take the *perfectness* of those who are asleep in Christ in the absolute, consummated sense, it remains with the *Maranatha*, Come Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly.

But although that middle state must be counted with, this takes nothing away from the great fact, that here *becoming*, there *being* dominates, and that the law of life above excludes all change, and rests in a perfectness, which neither decreases nor increases.

At once in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus held it before His disciples: Be ye therefore *perfect* as your Father in heaven is *perfect*.

To render the sinner *perfect* in Christ Jesus, is the end and aim of the Gospel.

Hence they are said to be, in heart and essence, already here "*perfect*" and "*holy*."

By one offering all we together are eternally *perfect*.

And that *perfectness* will not only be the mark of our being and once also of our manner of existence, but that *perfectness* shall also be the mark of our *consciousness*, of our *knowledge*, of our *visualization*.

Here on earth the most highly gifted believer knows only in part. But he who fell asleep in Jesus, though here he were ever so limited in his knowledge, has there a *perfected knowledge*. Also his knowledge is no more earthly, but Divine.

Here peering after the image in the mirror, there seeing face to face.

Here knowing in part, there knowing, as we are known of God.

What that mirror is, to which the holy apostle refers, is clear. Here we never *see* God Himself, but He, the Eternal, reflects Himself for us in His creation. "Both His eternal power and divinity are clearly seen and understood from the creatures." He reflects Himself for us in His direction of this world's course. They are "the works of God" which we should observe. He reflects Himself for us in our own rational consciousness. In His common grace. In the revelation of His holy Word. In what He did to our own soul.

This is the knowledge of God, granted us here. But whatever heights it may attain, this knowledge is always derived, imperfect knowledge, "knowledge *in part*." And even if to us personally, as to Paul, visions and prophecies had been granted, of all *this* knowledge it is ever the rule, that it shall be brought to nought.

The imperfection, which cleaves to all this our knowledge of God, is not merely that it is incomplete. Also in its kind it is imperfect. Therefore it is not supplemented, but it *passes away*, and then an altogether other kind comes in the place of it: direct knowledge, immediate knowledge, knowledge which is not learned, but from things addresses our being itself. A knowledge which is always and in every particular *perfect*.

This, however, does not exclude the relation with what we know here. It is and remains knowledge of the same reality. But the sort of knowledge shall be wholly different like the difference between looking upon the portrait (which is the mirror image), and rejoicing in the sight of the living object of your love in full reality.

The apostle compares this with what a man feels regarding his representations as a child. That was then true to him, he then lived therein, he could not imagine

it otherwise. But now, having become a man, he laughs at his childish representations. "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Cor, 13, 11).

And so it is also with him who fell asleep in Jesus. To him, to her came the *perfectness*, and *all that was in part*, was done away.

FROM this it appears anew, that for him who fell asleep in Jesus, there is no more *becoming*, but pure *being*. Here wax and increase, there an eternal being in perfectnesses.

For think, one can not wax and increase, without increasing one's knowledge. When you increase your knowledge to-day, your knowledge yesterday was knowledge in part. Thus he who deems that with our dead there is a going on in development, an increase in holiness, a growth in grace, transfers thereby at the same time "the knowing in part" into eternity. And this the apostolic word forbids. For is it not true, that a knowledge which gradually still increases and continues to increase, bears the mark of the *imperfect* and never can be perfect?

All this is—something which can not be indicated with sufficient emphasis—a carrying across of earthly relations into the eternal. Doing, as though on the other side of the grave it were merely the continuation of our life here.

The school, the high school on the other side of the grave. Here meditate and ponder, yonder meditate

and ponder. Here investigate and study, yonder investigate and study. And so also in heaven the wise man and the innocent child. The pride and haughtiness of scholars carried over into eternity.

And that very pride of our knowledge even with the most gifted thinker must be buried in the grave.

When the most learned professor loses a young child, which child belongs to the redeemed of the Lord, all the knowledge and learning of that clever father signifies nothing, nothing by the side of the perfected knowledge upon which the child entered.

Then the grave at once reverses the relation between the father and that child.

Before that dying, he the wise man, and that little child the innocent wight. After that dying, he the simple spectator in the mirror, and his little one knowing God *perfectly*.

IN the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be, is, (apart from the more or less correct interpretation of Eccl. 11, 3) the significant expression of the all-dominating, deeply-serious, soul-penetrating thought, that there is no conversion after death.

Also in this the same is implied again: After death no more *becoming*, or *change*, but an entering upon *eternal being*, unchangeably to *abide* therein. The Sabbath. The eternal rest.

That in the moment of dying something can yet take place between the soul and God, of which nothing may be observed by those who stand around the dying-bed, has always been maintained. And every one who takes

God's compassions large, heartily concurs with this. But when the stroke is fallen, there is a decision forever.

A more comprehensive, a better knowledge of the Gospel, of one's own sins, and of the fruit of Christ's offering, can then no more be added as new part to the old knowledge. Preaching of salvation goes by parts, and therefore belongs to this dispensation. In the perfectness it is an understanding of the eternal Redemption work with the clearness of the opened eye of the soul. But this very opening of the eye of the soul must come before dying. They, whose eye of soul remained closed even in dying, will mourn eternally.

Then one can never more *become*, what one *is* not. And what one *is* he continues to be unto all eternity.

Thus one great change, not *after* dying, but *in* dying itself: the action of God's grace, which transposes from the temporal into the eternal.

Then the nettle, which here still braided itself around the heart of God's child, and so often caused pain, is by God's grace forever removed, and the soul is *only* holy.

Then unfold at once the still closed flower buds, which in this cold atmosphere could not unfold themselves, and exhale eternally fragrance for God.

At once also, the look of the soul is then turned away from the dull image in the mirror, and turned toward the reality itself of God's holinesses.

Did not already the Psalmist sing of old: "I will behold thy face in righteousness, *I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness?*" (16, 15).

“*Your Life Is Hid with Christ in God*”

ONCE the evil voice in Eden’s garden whispered: “Thou, O man, can yourself be *as God*,” and in listening to that temptation originated the spring of all abomination and woe. But how then will you maintain, that they who have fallen asleep in Jesus have entered upon the rest of *eternal being*, which indeed is *God’s*, without, boldly and proudly, applying to man above an idea, which on earth has disturbed all his peace?

To be lifted up above time and transitoriness, above fluctuation and change, no more to know becoming or decaying, and in the “I am that I am” to express the secret of his eternal *being*, is not this what distinguishes the Creator from the creature, God in His majesty, from us, children of dust, in our frailty? And is this so, how will, how can you then transfer this trait of divine being upon the insignificant creature, even though that creature is one of the elect, one endowed with grace, a child of God, adopted in Zion which is above and introduced into the Father-house?

Is not this confounding the Divine with the human, the human with the Divine? Yea, is it not seeking highest blessedness in what Satan falsely told us, and in what was cursed of God?

We here leave the middle state alone. We center our attention upon the *consummation*. When God shall be glorious in His saints, and the last enemy shall have been brought to nought.

We now take those who have fallen asleep in Christ, in the new Jerusalem, upon the new earth, under the new heaven, after that Christ shall have given up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all.

Then only shall the *full* blessedness be there. And in that *full* blessedness, as we stated, there is no more time, but alone eternity. No fluctuation, but an eternally remaining equal to oneself. No changing, but in eternal rest maintaining ground. No more striving to reach a goal, but a being sunken away in one's ultimate aim. No more chasing after an ideal, but *possessing* the Highest Good. Never more a *becoming* of what one not yet was, but what one is, eternally *remaining*. For not one more of God's children a sanctifying of one's self or a making advances in holiness, but eternal rejoicing in the holiness received.

But does not all this transcend the boundary, which separates our human life from the life of our God?

Is it not attributing to man, what belongs to God alone, and to Christ, because He Himself is God?

ALSO here let what is revealed unto us from the side of God, serve exclusively as our guide in all our meditations.

To us is not yet revealed, what we shall be, but this we know, that *we shall be like Him*, for we shall see Him, as He is (1 John 3, 2).

"We are of God's generation."

For His saints whom He left behind on earth, the Mediator prayed: "Father, I will that where I am, there they shall be also, whom Thou hast given me."

"We shall know, *as we are known*, and we shall see God face to face."

Our name shall be: "The just *made perfect*."

There shall be no more chasing, no more driving, no more striving, but an eternal rest, a never ending Sabbath for the people of God.

"God shall be *all* and in all."

There shall be no more night, and thus no time nor transition of moment, but an eternal morning.

Spot nor wrinkle shall more disfigure the Bride of Christ.

Spotlessly clean shall be the raiment of our holiness.

As fruit of His eternal offering Christ shall present all *perfect* before God.

Our life, that now is hid with Christ in God, shall then be revealed with Him in undisturbable blessedness.

Confess, where then is there still place for fluctuation or change, for renewing or for higher development, for transition from lower into higher conditions, for an as yet *becoming* of what was not already included in our perfectness?

And where in His Word God Himself so presents *eternal life* to us, who will yet dare say, that looking forward to such a state of glory were grasping after something which not God promised, but Satan held out to us?

You do not comprehend it, and understand it not.

It is the mystery of eternity,

And this can not be otherwise, for here you have died, and that eternal life, that you already received in germ, is *hid* with Christ in God.

But for this very fact it *is*, far more real than if you yourself already held it in your hand.

And therefore it is also said to you, that you must wait yet for a little time, "for only, when Christ, *Who is your life*, shall be revealed, will you also with Him be revealed in glory."

OF "being *equal* with God," there is therefore no mention.

For here lies the boundary, that God has this eternal life *from* Himself and *in* Himself, while he who fell asleep in Christ, only received it as a *gift of grace* from his God.

The Son, not you, nor your dead in Christ, is it given, to have life *in Himself*.

This is the very mark of all true piety, that we do *not* seek our life in ourselves, but *outside of* ourselves, in Christ.

Surely, he who shall have drunk of the water that the Mediator gives, it shall become in him as a fountain, springing up unto eternal life. But always derived, always flowing toward us from without. Always a treasure *received*. Never for us the boast. To God alone the glory, and ours the never ending thanksgiving, the praise and the worship.

The God of the fathers also our Father, and we never anything else than His *children*.

He, our God, i.e., the *original* majesty, and we never ought else than the bearers of His reflection, adorned with His holy Image.

He from eternity to eternity never anything else than

the *eternal being*, we the originated who did not exist; from nothing having become, to reach forward unto eternal life; introduced into a glory, which never finds its prop and point of support in us, but solely in God.

Hence it is not true, that the boundary is obliterated. The boundary remains, the boundary is more sharply drawn. For not now, but only then will we understand, how altogether different the *cup* is from the *spring*, because only so no single drop shall glisten in that cup other than welled up from that spring.

Only the false boundary goes away. The boundary, which separates not God from His child, but the earthly from the heavenly, and which for this very reason you must never will to transfer into heaven.

But thereby indeed, the true, the never to be obliterated boundary shall stand out in full clearness.

We nothing than worshipers of His majesty, He, by all and in all the Only Worshiped One.

So it would also have been outside of sin, when the first man, by keeping of the commandment, from Paradise would have passed over into the eternal life.

But so is, and so it remains, in still far clearer and far sharper sense, now that it is from sin and misery, that Divine compassion draws us up to holiness and glory.

For now *the Mediator* steps in between.

Now for us, miserables, there is no eternal life, except as we have become one planting with Christ.

Now we do not have each for himself, nor all together eternal life, but only part in *His* life, provided

we are incorporated in Him, as members of His holy Body.

Now it is always *in Christ, through Christ, with Christ.*

Ye are dead, and your life is hid *with Christ* in God.

“And So Shall We Ever Be with the Lord”

WHAT in thinking of the Fatherland above strikes us every time again, is the positive certainty, that also on the other side of the grave, and unto the end, yea, to all eternity, Jesus shall retain His altogether unique significance for those who shall have become sharers of salvation.

By itself it would have appeared more natural, if after Jesus had finished the work of reconciliation upon earth, and by His return had ushered in the Kingdom of Glory, from that hour on, the work of restoration being completed, He would have lost His central significance for our heart.

Even 1 Cor. 15, 24-28, read by itself, gives the impression as though this were the tendency of revelation.

When there we read, that when “the end is come, Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, in order then Himself to become subject unto God, that God may be all in all,” does it not seem, as though then the Christ as Mediator disappears, to leave none other than a direct relation with God Himself as the overflowing fountain of our salvation?

He as Mediator would then have brought to a finish a work of Redemption in two great parts.

First the work of Redemption upon earth, by His first coming at Bethlehem. After that the establishment of the Kingdom, by His second return upon the clouds.

Then the Mediator's task would have been finished, the separation between God and man have been brought to nought, and in this way the original condition as in Paradise (still heightened in holiness) would return. A condition in which the fellowship of man with his God was still undisturbed, and in which a coming in between of a Mediator, of a Redeemer, of a Savior were unthinkable.

And yet it appears that such it shall *not* be.

On Patmos John saw the new Jerusalem come down from heaven. That was the Realm of glory. And yet, also of that new Jerusalem in its consummation he says: "The Lord, the almighty God, is her temple, *and the Lamb*. And that new Jerusalem had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, *and the Lamb is the candle thereof*" (21, 22, 23).

Hereby is attributed to the Lamb a permanent, durable significance in the world to come.

Hence there is something in the Mediatorship, which does not disappear, which does not come to an end, which does not fall away. Another apostle even puts so full an emphasis upon it, that he writes to the saints at Thessalonica (4, 17): *And so shall we ever be with the Lord*. An expression whereby, as all exegetes agree, only of an ever being *with* Jesus can be thought.

The holy apostle makes distinction between those who are asleep in Jesus, who have preceded us, and between us who at some later time are called away from this life.

They who have now fallen asleep in Jesus, are, when the Realm of glory begins, "brought again with Him."

Then shall the *whole* church, *all* the company of the elect be united. It will be one, interminable, all embracing assembly of the just made perfect. And therewith now including himself, declares the witness of Jesus: "And so shall we ever, i.e., in that eternal condition, in which never more change comes, *be with the Lord.*"

YET it shall no more be the condition of *now*.

At this moment the work of Redemption still goes on. The "Finished" of Golgotha by no means refers to the *whole* work of the Mediator, but exclusively to the making an offering of Himself on the part of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

But meantime the great work of Redemption goes on.

In threefold respect.

First by bringing in and sanctifying the elect who still stand afar off, or are just born. Secondly by bringing into subjection the powers of evil. And finally in "preparing a place," or if you like, in general, in preparing the Realm of glory.

This threefold work only began after the Ascension. It is the second act in the holy drama. And it is in the return of Jesus upon the clouds, that this last act shall be ended.

For this second task, which now for eighteen centuries Jesus has been fulfilling, "all power is given Him in heaven and on earth," He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and by Him mediate, and not directly

by the Eternal Being, the high sovereignty, i.e., the kingship over all created things, is exercised.

Meanwhile, as is indeed self-evident, the supreme management and highest authority over heaven and earth is and remains in the hand of God. But, so long as sin is not destroyed, Satan not yet bound, and the last enemy (i.e., death) is not yet brought to nought, fellowship of the Thrice-Holy with His creation can not yet be direct and immediate, and dominion is exercised mediately by the Mediator.

And only when the work of Redemption, also in its second part, shall be consummated, and every haze of sin shall forever be withdrawn, never again to return, shall every hindrance between the Holy One and His then again sanctified Creation have fallen away. There shall be no more enemy who can stir himself. And when in this way God Himself, directly, shall again be *all in all* His saints, shall the Kingship of the Mediator take an end, and the Mediator shall put down this intermediary kingship, that the Kingdom again directly might be God's.

Not as though the Second person of the Trinity should stand outside of this. Father, Son and Holy Ghost are indivisibly one in power and being. But this is the distinction that then no more Jesus Christ *as the God-man*, but the Son, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, *as God*, shall exercise that Kingly dominion over heaven and earth.

BUT also in that new condition, which then enters in, and which shall bring the history of the world to an

end, the God-man, the Incarnated Word, the Head of the Body, Christ our Savior, remains for all God's saints the point of union.

The Son shall not put off His human nature, but retain it. Glorified He shall be glorious among His glorified ones. And it shall eternally be the jubilation of all, that then they shall be ever with the Lord.

Those who fell asleep in Jesus, enjoy this salvation already now, only in another way. Paul himself says of his dying before Jesus' return upon the clouds: "I have a desire to be unbound, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1, 23). But also in that middle state Jesus still bears His redeemed by His power of Redemption. Were the Mediator to let go of them for one moment, they would sink. Also in them God has not yet become the *all in all*. They still stand under the kingship of their glorified Head, and are not yet in the immediate Kingdom of the Father. Their tie to the Eternal Being is still in the Mediator. They still bide the glory that is to come. They still know the homesickness after the consummation. In all probability they still take part, as the angels of God, in the conflict against Satan, in which case this is "the power that is given them over the Heathen."

Thus for them also the great change only comes in that illustrious day, when the Mediator shall once again appear upon this earth, and the end shall be ushered in.

Then dawns for them also the resurrection of the flesh; their redemption also shall be perfected and consummated; God shall be *all in all* in every one of them; and for them also shall only then begin that new, that lasting condition which abides forever.

But whatever may change up yonder, their tie to

Jesus shall not be loosened, for it shall eternally be their delight and their boast, *that they shall ever be with the Lord.*

AND yet this being with Jesus shall also for them become different from what it has thus far been.

He will no more *pray* for them, for when the eternal blessedness has been sealed by the Amen of the consummation, what will there be to pray for in behalf of these full blessed ones! He will no more *protect* them, for against whom or against what power would this protection turn itself, when the last enemy shall have been brought to nought! Also He will no more *rule* them as Mediator, for the Kingdom shall then be God's.

The feeling of eternal thanks towards that Lamb of God, that by His blood redeemed them, shall surely not give way. Rather only then, when the blessedness is perfect, shall that thankfulness reach its highest point.

But yet, the ever being with the Lord then obtains a different significance.

This being with Jesus shall then altogether go up in being member of the sacred body, of which He is the blessed Head.

Not as a group of onelings, each by himself, shall the blessed elect eternally delight themselves in the majesty of their God. They shall form one *generation*, the generation of the reborn children of men. They shall be "the universal assembly and church." As the renewed humanity, organically one, they shall stand before God. One body. And in that mystical, holy body,

member bound to member, and all the members together bound by the unity under the eternal, the full-blessed Head. With that Head every member, according to God's holy ordinance, united. Never more to separate from that Head. With that blessed Head, from eternity unto eternity, in full, in pulsating, in animating relation of life. Alone in that Head to feel oneself truly blessed. *And so shall they be ever with the Lord.*

“One Plant with Him”

BOTH in devout-emotional conversation, and in Holy Scripture, there is much said of “the other side of the grave.” But the content of “conversation” and “Scripture” is so different. In conversation it goes all too readily about the man who died or will die. In Scripture everything moves about the central point in Christ.

This is not asserted absolutely. In conversation undoubtedly the Mediator also is mentioned, and in Scripture they among us who died or are facing death. But in conversation as a rule man stands more in the foreground, in Scripture more the Christ of God.

Perhaps one might even say more sharply, that thus the *epitaph* of *Scripture* differs. In circles of the Reformed one is sober at the tomb, and among faithful confessors of the Savior at large more Scriptural. But when one enters the larger circles, and makes a study of epitaphs in cemeteries of large cities, it is noteworthy, how little is chiseled therein of the “Conqueror of death and grave,” and how almost solely of the person, who went away or of the person who remained behind.

In conversation and at the tomb, to mention just this one thing, one can safely say, that the pathetic question of “seeing again” appears very strongly in the fore, while in Holy Scripture there is almost no mention of this at all. And to this “seeing again” all sorts of other questions attach themselves: Do our dead know

anything of us? Do they still pray for us? Are they conscious of it, when we on earth are engaged with them? Can they still do anything for us, or we for them? Or is the tie, that once bound us together, cut through, and have *we* nothing more to do with them, or *they* with us?

He who touches this sort of subject, especially with the gentler sex, is very certain of an hearing. Spiritism is for the most part sprung from it. And, though the man who is beyond all this, may play his game of heartless scorn with such questions, it remains true, that at our graves all such questions are with, oh, so great difficulty dismissed.

It is so human!

And yet, Holy Scripture does not encourage it. She does not feed the tendency, which is evident in this. Altogether not in the New Covenant, and only very rarely in the Old. Something which is the more noteworthy with Israel, because Israel became of age in Egypt, where the ceremonial of the grave, more than with any other nation, formed not merely a part, no, but the rich activity of life.

Care for the grave, with the people among which Israel from a group of tribes became a nation, very far exceeded care for the house in which during life one lived.

ONLY once has Jesus pertinently expressed Himself regarding a question which touches the "seeing again." It concerned the woman, who in Livirate marriage had successively had seven brothers to husband, and of

whom Jesus was asked: In the resurrection of the dead, to whom shall she then really be bound as wife?

But also then Jesus so little fed the hope of the seeing again, that He rather dismissed every idea, as though after death such an earthly tie of love were yet valid. In "Lazarus and the rich man" Jesus truly portrays an immediate recognition of each other after both had died, but here also the former tie is dropped, and the relation rather reversed.

Also in apostolic writings you find literally no word regarding that "seeing again," and this notwithstanding the fact that particularly Paul treats repeatedly and extensively, of what is to follow after death. And what is most striking, is, that also in Revelation, in which the delights of eternal life are painted in vivid colorings, among the joys which shall eternally refresh God's child, with no single intimation of "seeing again" is mention made. "Seeing again" now taken of course in that tender sense, in which the word is current, as resuming again and continuing the intimate tie of love which held bound husband and wife, mother and child, friend and friend.

Of this you find nothing.

A blank, from which you are not to infer, that therefore there will be *no* recognition and *no* meeting again. This is nowhere stated. But a noteworthy silence, which should not be explained from oversight or forgetting, and admonishes us definitely, in our thought of the other side of the grave, to give our dead whom we loved, the second place, and to put to the fore, what in Scripture ever occupies the same: your tie, not to our dead, but *your tie to Jesus*.

Only think of the man, whose father was awaiting

burial, and who first wanted to bury his father, and who of Jesus was given the rejoinder: "Let the dead bury their dead, you, preach the kingdom of God."

Not only here, but to beyond the grave, it applies: "He who loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me."

If therefore to the Holy Apostle every representation of heavenly delight concentrates itself in this: "*And so shall we ever be with the Lord,*"—yet also this being with Jesus should not be taken too sensually.

It will not be a gathering of ourselves group-wise around Jesus, as the five thousand on the shore of the Galilean lake, neither an intimate being together like that of the disciples in Jerusalem's upper room.

That "being ever with Jesus" is said of *all* the blessed. How then can the multitude of millions and millions elect, a company which no one can number, not a single hour, but *ever*, i.e., from eternity to eternity, in such a wise be with Jesus? No, the innumerableness of the multitudes, and the endlessness of the being together, exclude this.

If then by reason of this we do not deny the *personal* relation—for it expressly states: "*be with Jesus,*" and also "that we shall see Him as He is,"—yet it suffers no doubt, that here we have to go back to the organic relation between Jesus and those who belong to Him, to the being incorporated in His mystical Body, to the being one plant with Him in the root of life.

Of this indeed the Scripture is full.

He the *Vine* and we the branches. He *the Head*

and we the members of His Body. He the *good Shepherd* and we the sheep of His pasture. He the *Bridegroom* and all His church together the Bride. The *spirit of Resurrection*, which triumphed in Him, penetrating all the body of His believers. He *our King* and we His people. He *our High Priest* and we the tribes that go up to the holy Zion. He *our heavenly Captain* and we the soldiers, who assemble ourselves under His holy banner. He *the second Adam* and we the people of His holy generation. And to bring all this out in its deep organic significance: We all *one plant* with Him Who on Patmos called Himself "the root of David."

THUS back and underneath our personal relation to Jesus, as center of our longing and the best friend of our heart, lies the life-tie, the organic life-unity with the Son of man.

The vine, the plant has a root, and from that root springs the trunk and stems, and on those stems or branches bud the twigs, and on those twigs you see the leaves appear, and between that foliage yellows and ripens the fruit. But though there extends ever so great a distance between the uppermost twig and the root, yet all nourishing life-sap is never come to that uppermost twig otherwise than from the root. Kill that root, and every branch and twig, every leaf and flower withers.

So depends our life upon the life of Jesus.

The finest fibers of our existence run out upon Jesus. Taken ourselves loose apart from Him for but one moment, all our life withers and wilts. From Him

all life comes to us, and never otherwise than in Him can we save our life.

This is already so here, and naturally goes through far more strongly in eternity. To think ourselves in eternity for one moment *alongside of or over against* Jesus, is absurd. It will be one magnificent Cedartree on Lebanon, and on the branches of that Cedartree every redeemed *one* of the ten thousand leaves. But that whole Cedartree standing on his root, from that root sucking up life, to that root fastened by every fiber of life. And so shall we ever be *with Jesus*.

This applies in the image of the plant (Rom. 6, 5) and holds equally true in the image of the one Body. The life of the Body, and of every member of that Body, depends upon the life of the Head, is led, directed, governed and moved by the Head. Only by the consciousness of the Head every member of the Body feels its own life.

It is the richest, it is the most absolute unity thinkable. Only in and by reason of and through the Head every member in the Body has its reason of existence.

ALREADY at Baptism we therefore speak of a “being *incorporated* in Christ,” and from this springs later on our personal, our conscious, our Jesus knowing *faith*, and through that faith we give ourselves and we give others account of our personal conversion to Jesus.

From that unity of ground of life springs our relation to Jesus, but it *becomes* personal, and so unfolds the love for Jesus, and comes the mysticism of the intimate living together with Jesus in our soul.

Also again the: "ever be with Jesus," but now in another, mystic conscious, higher known way. And also that mysticism shall eternally go on. We shall see Him as He is, and in the Lamb shall our rejoicings be. Ever and for all simultaneously by means of fellowship, which here we can surmise, which the inventions of science indicate from afar, but which only eternity shall reveal unto us.

And provided this stands in the fore, then yea, comes also the "seeing again" to its turn. For everything that is one plant, has also mutual fellowship: everything that belongs to one body, stands also mutually in relationship of life.

But then it is a finding back each other, not to go sailing upon the dancing waters of sentimentality, but, far higher, far more seriously, *in the fellowship of saints!*

"They Which Follow the Lamb"

IF the holy apostle Paul made mention of a high, holy happiness, which every one that fell asleep in Jesus, finds in the "being ever with the Lord," in the visions of Patmos this close fellowship with the Mediator is still more strongly emphasized. For of those who are most richly glorified is said: "These are they *which follow the lamb* whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. 14, 4).¹

That herewith distinction is made between blessed and blessed, can not be denied. The 144,000 which are here in question, are "firstfruits" who receive a higher reward and therefore an extraordinary glory. These are they who sing the song before the Lamb with a fullness, purity and depth, such as no others can. Does it not say of these $12 \times 12,000$ that with a voice as the voice of many waters, and yet with a voice as of players upon harps, they sang a new song before the throne, and is it not added thereto: "No man could learn that song but the 144,000, which were redeemed from the earth? Are they not called the redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb?" Is it not said of them, that they have not defiled themselves with women nor with lies? And apart from their altogether unique song, is not their glory described in this won-

¹ It has been tried to make this mean: persons who in their earthly life have walked in the paths of Jesus. But this can not be the case. In the original it is in the present tense. Not that they followed Jesus, but: they follow the Lamb.

drously beautiful trait: "These are they which follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth."

The effort on the part of some, to make all distinction in glory fall away, and to make it appear, as though all the dead are to enjoy a perfectly *equal* glory, has no stand before Holy Scripture.

Did not Jesus Himself express it as a fundamental thought, that *His Father would reward openly*, what had been piously thought and performed in the quiet hiddenness of life? Did not Jesus refer again and again to a "*Reward*, that will be great in the heavens"? And does not Paul declare, that the righteous Judge in that great day will reward every one, according as he has done in the body? He who has left much for Jesus' sake, shall he not receive more in the eternal life?

Salvation is for all, but in degree of glory, he who exhibited stronger faith, excels him, who was more backward. And as one of the very signs of that highest degree that "following of the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth," is here indicated.

All the redeemed shall ever be with the Lord, but, as among the disciples, there will be a broader and a narrower circle of fellowship.

The closest to Jesus in glory, he who here on earth has believed, loved, lived most conscientiously in fellowship with his Savior.

THUS your attitude toward Jesus on earth, is the standard of your relation to Jesus up yonder. And in that fellowship with Jesus alone, they who have fallen asleep, can find one another back.

Thus there will be seeing again and finding back, but in an entirely different relation.

Already on earth we are familiar with this transition. They who were schoolmates together, can later on find each other back incorporated in the army, or as sailors of the same ship, or as members of the same board of directors. And, truly, also then the old comradeship is alive again, but on an entirely different footing and in an entirely different relation. Now dominated by the new condition, into which they have entered, and by the altogether different relation, in which they stand to each other.

Even with moving from one town to another we are aware of this. You may live three long years in a town and there enjoy regular and friendly association with your social peers. But move, change place of residence, and change again, and let it happen, that twenty years later you find back one of those earlier acquaintances in the new place of your residence, of course you still know one another, but yet your attitude becomes new and different.

You in the meantime have become more mature. *He* also has developed himself, but he differently from you. And the relation in which you come to each other, will bear the marks of this.

And so it will also be with the seeing again.

What you have on earth experienced together in Jesus, remains; all the other falls away; and for so far only can the finding back lead to new fellowship, as together you are rich in Jesus.

So for the *earthly* tie a *heavenly* tie comes in place, and that tie can not be other than in Jesus. Two persons who see each other again are both members of the Body of Christ, and the place they will occupy in that Body of Christ, determines the relation in which now they will stand to one another.

Here on earth all sorts of other factors still operate upon your closer connection with men. Family ties, place of residence, business connections, material interest, likeness of taste and character, and so much more, and by no means merely your tie to Jesus. Frequently even that tie to Jesus only loosely accompanies the family tie, or is lacking altogether. There can even be two persons, who both fell asleep in Jesus, and who on earth never had fellowship with each other in Jesus, though in business or other ways were much in touch with each other.

We do not say, that the tie which in heaven shall bind us to Jesus, is altogether outside the natural relationship of soul and soul, of character and character. This difference and this agreement in character, sense and disposition flow forth from God's ordinance in the creation, and has therefore abiding value. Surely it is also operative in heaven. But yet, also this joining of hands can in the realm of glory only consist in Jesus, while here on earth it was so frequently evident in all sorts of other interests besides that of fellowship of faith.

So it is possible, that this natural affinity brought two persons to holy wedlock. And it is equally thinkable, that between parents and children from the tie of blood a spiritual tie arose. And be it now, that this marriage tie founded upon spiritual sympathy, or tie

between parents and children, was truly braided in *Jesus*, then naturally that tie is also operative in eternity. Still, even then never by reason of marriage, or by reason of generation, but *in Jesus* and alone under the influence of that personal affinity, which existed here by virtue of the ordinance of creation.

Thus what must be watched against, is not homesickness after the seeing again, but the urge of obtaining each other back *for the sake of* the earthly relation and *in* the earthly relation.

Every longing to meet one another again otherwise than *in Jesus*, antagonizes the claim of faith.

CONSIDER also, that your life circle in the realm of glory, will be so much, much greater, than here below.

Here you have lived together with the saints of one generation. In the realm of glory you are given a place in the "general assembly of the just made perfect," or, if you will, in the broad circle of the generations of all ages, which have been before you, and which shall come after you.

Here you have lived with the saints of one single village, one single town, one single land. In the realm of glory it will be a living together with the redeemed by the blood of the Lamb from all nations, and peoples, and tongues.

Here, according to the limitation of this dispensation, you have lived together with thousands of the redeemed of the Lord. But you only had more intimate fellowship of life with a very few, a circle of twelve, twenty, certainly not exceeding one hundred. In the

realm of glory the fellowship shall be a perfect one, and simultaneously extend to a company, which no one can number.

Is it now so unthinkable, that among those saints of all ages and all nations persons will be found, which spiritually stand much closer to you, who inwardly are far nearer allied to you, than those few, with whom here on earth you could associate? And is it not then evident, that with this far richer choice the seeing again of these few, recedes in the background?

To follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, remains the highest, and therefore every relation to your fellow-blessed must remain subordinate to your relation to the Lamb.

Dying of God's child is therefore called in Scripture: *To fall asleep in Jesus*.

And this says more, than being assured by Jesus of everlasting life. *Falling asleep in Jesus*, is at the moment of his dying to be found *in Jesus*. It is dying as a member of the Body of Christ. It is going into death as one, who is incorporated in Him. As one who can not be thought apart from Jesus. As one who is forever inseparable from Jesus.

Of course there is fellowship therefore between *all*, who now or ever have fallen *asleep in Jesus*, for it is and remains eternally one Body under one Head.

But also in that Body the relation of the members mutually is not determined by the relation which on earth they sustained one to the other, but chiefly by the place which they occupy in that Body of Jesus.

This *can* coincide with your earthly relation, but it can also altogether differ from it.

And therefore it is, that Scripture does not point us to the seeing again *of each other*, but always to the seeing *of Jesus*, to which all seeing again must ever remain subordinate.

“Baptized for the Dead”

ARE you able, after the mortal remains of your dead are lowered in the grave, *to do yet anything* for him, for her who went from you?

The impulse toward this is especially strong in the early days of mourning. So strong, that not infrequently one gets the impression, as though the love of many goes out more warmly toward their dead, than toward the yet living, which God has committed to their care.

With this the first reference is not to the grave-cult. Veneration of the grave is something by itself; something which does not aim so much to do anything for the dead, as much more to seek satisfaction and quieting for one's own sorrow. That in this also all sorts of psychological stimuli can coöperate, shows already the “building of the graves of the prophets,” but yet the grave-cult owes its origin mainly to sentiment. The *necessity* of having to separate, and yet the *inability* to separate, and now, as a last resort, in the feeling and in the utterance of the emotions to cling to the grave.

Altogether different on the other hand is the inclination of love in him, who still wants to *do* something for the good of his dead.

This impulse of love, especially in circles of the Reformation, has generally been too coldly and too severely criticized. Only let not he, who stands outside our circle, in his turn condemn too harshly this Reformed coldness!

Everything here depends upon the supremely serious question, whether we can add anything to the eternal happiness of our beloved, after they have died.

In a twofold sense this has been deemed possible. On one hand by belief in a Purgatory. On the other hand by accepting the possibility of Conversion after death.

The Purgatory-doctrine rests upon the opinion, that the believer truly obtains forgiveness, but that he also himself must yet perform temporal penance, and that, if he did not do this in full during his lifetime, he must do so after his death. Moreover, that the prayers and good works of those who are still alive, can benefit those who have died and are now in purgatory. And finally, that the offering of the Mass has atoning power not alone for the living, but also for the dead.

This can not be our confession. We confess the offering of Christ as a *perfect* offering. Jesus is the Lamb of God, that *taketh away* the sin of the world. Justified by faith, *we have* peace with God. And in dying the Holy Ghost works the grace of entire sanctification. Thus this impulse can not drive us. But can it not therefore be understood, that they who so think and confess, are impelled by love for their dead, to shorten their suffering on the other side of the grave and to alleviate it?

And the case is the same with them, who hold out Conversion after death as a possibility. A child, a husband whom one loved, a friend, to whom one was attached, dies without having come to Jesus. Imagine, that such an one also after dying, in eternity, could still convert himself. Confess, that God's grace must help him do it. Also, that your prayer can move the heart

of the eternal Compassionate One to bring it to effect. And can it be otherwise, than that that mother for her child, that wife for her husband, that friend for his friend will gladly offer any sacrifice, to favor their conversion, and therewith their eternal blessedness?

With this also we can not agree. Here, not on the other side of the grave, falls the decision. What you are in your last moment, you eternally remain. But were it otherwise, *could* we, after their death, be of help to our dead, who die without Jesus, there would be no love in us, if we did not render it.

The holy apostle recognizes this so fully, that he is not impatient, even with those who had themselves baptized for the dead (1 Cor. 15, 29), but rather appeals to their firm faith in the resurrection of the dead.¹

SHALL we call it a lack, that, for the sake of our confession, *this* demonstration of love is foreign to us?

There is no cause for this. Even less yet when you observe, how this demonstration of love for the dead frequently leads to the neglect of love for the living. He who deems, that after the death of his child, he can yet further its conversion, so readily refrains from urging his child to conversion during its lifetime. And likewise he who thinks that after his death he can per-

¹ With interpretation of this passage we do not detain ourselves. To postpone Baptism until one's death, was common at the time. It was thought that in Baptism all sins previous thereto, were taken away. Hence the postponement. A postponement which frequently led to total omission, when death overtook one. In which case, it is said, some one else had himself baptized in behalf of the departed, thinking that this baptism was valid in his behalf. We express no opinion here. We refer to this merely to show, that Paul, making mention of this custom, limits himself, to the consideration of the *motive* behind it.

fect his purification, is readily inclined to make light of the seriousness of sanctification in this life.

The more absolute the line of demarcation between this and the life eternal remains, and the more unchangeable the decision, which takes place in dying, the more intense the seriousness becomes, which reveals itself on this side of the grave.

The abuse, to which the other principle has led, we do not even approach. Money has here also played its evil game. For money the Mass, and the Mass the means of salvation for our dead. The materialism that here entered is well known. Yet we raise no objection here. We here consider only the noble side of it for so far as it expresses the longing, of doing if possible anything yet for the blessedness of our dead.

But though for us this falls away altogether, because the decision at death is irrevocable, and in the dying of those who fell asleep in Jesus the grace of sanctification is made perfect,—still this yet remains: Can also we not do anything for our dead? If not in behalf of their salvation, yet perhaps something in behalf of themselves.

And this question is not always treated with sufficient tenderness.

WE should not *forget* our dead. After their departure they should be alive in our memory. The place, which they occupy in our heart, must not too speedily be taken by all sorts of other concerns. The poet sang of “The empty chair,”—why did he not sing also of the empty place in our heart?

And yet, in our days, and in our circles, that forgetting is sometimes so rapid. The apostle speaks of those who "are widows indeed," and now, does not deep widow-sorrow become more and more rare? One speaks much of "orphans," but almost only in the sense of their bereavement, their forsakenness, their helplessness; all too little of the loss sustained by their heart. So many "orphans" do not know the mourning of the orphaned heart.

What the Psalmist sings of the dead: "Their place knoweth them no more," and which with him refers to much later and to long after their dying, now so frequently takes place within the year after their death.

And that forgetting argues against love, against devotion, against tenderness of heart. True, we observe no "all souls," but there are those, for whom an intentional remembrance of their dead would be no superfluous wealth.

And not forgetting is not enough. There can frequently much good be done yet for our dead. To defend their honor and good name over against disparagement and slander. To bring to a finish for them a work they had begun. To continue labor in their spirit, that the influence, they exerted, may work after effect. Also to pay off for them a debt they left unpaid. Alms which they dispensed, to dispense, as though they were still alive. To remove bitternesses, which as tares had sprung up between them and their environment. To keep in honor their name and their remembrance. What we would wish to have done for us after our death, all this, and nothing less, to do for our dead. Thus, in life and in death, after the rule of holy love: What ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.

THERE is also a *thinking* of our dead, which is still something else than not *forgetting* them.

Not forgetting refers to their former life here; it is missing them every time anew in our earthly life. Imagining how it would be, in case they were still here.

But *thinking* of our dead, means: living along with them in the condition *in which they now are*. No more as persons which once were, but as redeemed, as now they *live*, up yonder, with the Savior. Not to invite appearances, or to invoke visions. The life of fellowship in that sense is not to be continued after their death. But we can engage ourselves with them, and bring them before our mind in their saved state. Rejoice in the delight which they taste. Feel oneself small alongside of the high position, to which they have attained. Not thuswise to repress mourning, but, for their sakes, from sorrow revive in the joy of their salvation.

Not that we should pray for them. There is nothing more to pray for in their behalf. They have everything. Still to pray for them would be, as though they still lacked something, which by the aid of our prayer ought yet to come to them.

But it is something altogether different, that they might and must live *in our prayers*.

Your prayer is not merely an asking and a supplication. It is also a lifting up of the soul in worship. A lifting up of the heart above, from the haziness of this somber life to the sunny brightness of God's blessed heaven. As Scripture calls it, having “walks among those that are with God.”

In our prayer we do not look up to an empty heaven; but to an heaven with all the thousands of God's angels. To a heaven with the Cherubim and Sera-

phim, to a heaven with the assembly of the just made perfect. To the Zion above with God, where God appears shining in His beauty.

And there our sanctified representation *also finds them back*, who once with us here served the Lord, and are now asleep in Jesus.

So we think of them before the throne of glory. So their image looms up before us and in us, when the eye of our soul loses itself in the spiritual view of the heaven of heavens.

Therein is the continuance of the life of fellowship of soul; but then of a life of fellowship, from which everything earthly fell away.

A life of fellowship which utters its holy perceptions before God alone, and receives its corresponding perceptions from God alone and in His fellowship.

*“Abraham Is Ignorant of Us and Israel
Knows Us Not”*

OBSERVES he who fell asleep after his departure what still happens here on earth, and more particularly in his former circle of life? The question can be put, whether we who remain behind, can still do anything for our dead; but also the other whether our dead can still do anything for us. And this depends largely upon the possibility or impossibility, of their taking notice of our lot and of what goes on in our heart.

It is known how especially Spiritism has raised these tender questions again. But in former ages also the spirit of the bereaved and of those that mourned has looked for an answer to these questions, and from our side there has been a cleaving especially to the prayer of Isaiah, which is recorded in chapter 63 of his oracles, and in which among other utterances this definite one occurs: “O Lord, Abraham *knows not of us* and Jacob *knows us not*, Thou art our Father; Redeemer from of old is thy name.”

Yet we should be on our guard, not to infer from this, more than it contains.

When Isaiah thus prayed, Abraham and Jacob had already been dead many centuries. Here on earth neither Abraham nor Jacob had ever come to know Isaiah or one of his contemporaries.

Here, therefore, there could be no knowledge of remembrance. Here is declared in a very definite sense,

that the dead know nothing of conditions, or persons, whom in their life on earth they have not known. But from this it follows by no means, that they should not be able to continue some sort of life along with the circle upon earth which they have known.

One might rather say, that in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus Jesus attributes knowledge to Abraham regarding the vicissitudes on earth of persons who lived long after him. In this parable indeed Abraham shows, that he well knew the altogether different lot in life, which had been the portion of that rich man and of poor Lazarus on earth.

It is then argued, that what is here recorded by Isaiah is not a word of God, not an oracle, but a complaint of a man, who could be mistaken, and that in any case the word of Jesus must be to us of far heavier weight. According to Isaiah's complaint Abraham knows nothing of us. According to Jesus' parable Abraham knows our whole lot in life. And so not what Isaiah complained, but what Jesus taught must be true.

Yet this also again goes too far. Jesus here speaks in a parable. In this parable, as is evident from what it says about Abraham's bosom, the image is taken from the then current representation of the Jews. No one of us indeed will go so far, as to expect that after his death he will provisionally be carried into Abraham's bosom. The expectation of the Jews of that day directed itself after dying to Abraham. Our expectation does not go out to the old patriarch, but to "being with Christ."

Only this much is evident, that Isaiah's complaint only refers to the not knowing anything of those whom on earth we have *not* known, and nothing definite regarding the awareness, also after our death, of what be-

falls those, with whom on earth we have shared the bitter and the sweet.

UPON this closer question Holy Scripture spreads no light. From the narrative of the witch of Endor nothing can be inferred, since here it was a case of deception and superstition. Also the recognition of Nebuchadnezzar by his vanquished enemies in the vision of Isaiah 14 when they say to him: "How art thou fallen, O, Morning Star" offers no decisive answer, in so much as the portrayal of such a vision may never be put on a par with history.

If it is difficult to accept, that like questions were not also raised in the days of Jesus and the apostles, and is it nevertheless evident, that in no one of the epistles a revelation regarding it is given us, not even in the book of the Revelation of John, it may be inferred from this, that the Lord is not willing, that we should lose ourselves too much in these musings and reflections.

All that rests us, therefore, is to derive our inferences from the nature of the case. And then the bearing knowledge of what befalls us on earth, on the part of our dead in Jesus certainly becomes highly improbable.

Also after dying our dead continue to be finite beings, creatures with limited horizon. Of omniscience there is no mention with them. And even our Savior would have no omniscient knowledge of us, were He not partaker of the Divine nature. Also in our Catechism the answer to question 47 sharply makes this same

distinction. "With respect to His human nature, He is no more on earth. But with respect to His Godhead, majesty, grace and spirit, He is at no time absent from us."

This last is not attributable to our dead in Christ, and may therefore *not* be applied to them.

And in so much as knowledge of what happens with us and goes on within us, demands such an omniscience, the boundary is here put, which we can not remove.

To this is added still something else.

Although until the return of Jesus our dead still miss the full glory, yet blessedness has begun with them at once. Think only of the "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Would it tally with this, that our dead have knowledge of our *suffering* and of our *sins*?

If they continually took part with us in our struggles against anxieties, and if their heart were to writhe with pain every time they saw us fall into sin, in view of the so much finer and tenderer love of their heart, would full blessedness be conceivable for them? Consider, that the black spot on our soul is not only evident in our courser sins, but operates daily throughout all our sinful life, and thus, with their more delicate perception of holiness would be to them a continual source of commiseration and of vexation.

If then on this ground it must be seriously doubted, that our dead have knowledge of what after their death happens *with* us and *in* us on earth, another question

is, whether the life of remembrance is not continued in them.

He who travels in distant lands, and in far off regions is cut off from all fellowship with what he left at home, surely continues the life of imagination and of remembrance with his own. And in this sense it is in every way possible, that also our dead in their blessed life above, in their remembrance carry us with them.

Yet this may not be taken in an earthly sense. For them there is a separation, which in this measure they have not known before. All their life up yonder is dominated from Christ as the center. What eternally goes in against Christ, is cut off from their love. Only what belongs to Christ or shall belong, interests their sanctified love.

Thus in the feeling also or sense of their memory-life a separation must have entered in. For so much as they whom they left behind, are in Christ, or by the tie of election shall be drawn to Christ, their love for them goes on, and increases in tenderness. But also on the other hand, for so much as this tie in Christ is wanting, or shall never be laid, their love for them would react against Christ.

And so it may be inferred, that living along in memory with those whom they left behind on earth, goes on where that tie with Christ is present or shall come, but with respect to others is cut off. Only so would this memory-life bring no disturbance in their blessedness.

On the other hand it would even heighten their blessedness, when among God's angels they hear the shout of rejoicing arise over one sinner who is converted, in case it were told them, that that sinner was

their child, their father, their mother, their brother, their friend.

IF now, barring this distinction, there is a continuance of the life of memory, there is then no single reason thinkable, why they who are asleep in Jesus, should not also *pray* for those whom they left behind.

Jesus prays for us, Jesus lives to pray for us. Hence the certainty of our salvation does not exclude prayer for us above. Thus His prayer also in heaven is nothing else, than, in His fellowship with the Father, giving expression to the love for His own.

Yet evidently Scripture does not intend, that in these prayers of our blessed we shall seek a point of support for our heart. For then with regard to it more would have been revealed to us. The point of support of our heart, the anchor of our hope, lies solely in the prayer of Jesus, and *not* in the prayer of angels or of saints who went before us.

But if our heart is fortified against this, and continues to place its hope solely on the Savior, the thought is ever delightful, that, as God's angels are sent out to minister unto us, and at our death carry us into heaven, so likewise our saints who have gone before us, now in an altogether holy love continue their remembrances of us, then also when their soul pours out itself before the God of all grace.

“Who Shall Give Thee Thanks in the Grave?”

WITH what will happen with us after our death, even though it has become evident that we are immortal, the busy world does not concern itself. For so far as there was development in the thought of our age regarding what *follows* after dying, doubt first gained the day, then unbelief and then an ever more definite denial. In the broad circles of scholars it is now said to be accepted as final, that dying is nothing more than a sinking back in the nothing from which we sprang.

And as regards the great multitudes of honest, noble burghers, who have a horror of everything that savors of “the pious,” but yet would think it dreadful, if one had no more “God and immortality,” and who for this reason, when there is a corpse in the house awaiting burial and later on at the grave, are still anxious to hear of “God,”—no clarifying of ideas could take place with them, and no development with respect to this, because neither thinking nor speaking about eternal things belongs to their manner of life.

Only among *confessing* Christians in this age it came to a more finished image of our representation. Especially the defenders of a thousand years’ kingdom have contributed the impetus to this. And though it did not take hold of all confessors, yet it may gratefully be acknowledged, that a quiet understanding awoke again of much that is to come long after dying, not only in

the Judgment, but also in the realm of Glory, that will be ushered in after the day of Judgment.

So distinction is made again between the condition of those who fall asleep in Jesus, from the hour of their dying until the return of Jesus, and between that altogether different condition, which is to be born when the dead shall rise from their graves, and the Judgment ensues, and after this Judgment the full Glory shall unfold itself.

And to this for long years one had become unused.

After dying it was thought that the soul was in full blessedness; and when there was full blessedness, what more could be desired.

Once the world would come to an end. This was understood. And then there would come a day of Judgment, but that day of Judgment concerned the godless, not the souls already blessed. And after that day of Judgment the life of full blessedness in the Father-house for the souls of the redeemed would go on in heaven, just as immediately after dying it had already begun.

Everything Scripture reveals regarding the Return of Jesus, regarding the Resurrection of the dead, regarding the day of Judgment and of what comes after, had lost its grip upon the heart. All this indeed would take place in this way, but for those who had fallen asleep in Jesus, it would have no significance.

For them it would ever be the full blessed life of the soul in heaven, and as to what was to happen with the body, and what was to become of this earth, gave them no concern.

This was indeed contradictory, yet it was so. In

overspirituality interest centered upon *the soul*, and upon what was to happen with *the soul*. And this remained full blessed, but forever separated from the body, in the Father-house with God.

You know what formerly was taught of the "sleep of the soul," a representation against which Calvin wrote one of his first treatises.

The hour would come in which all that were in the graves would hear the voice of Jesus, and would come forth, they who had done good to the resurrection of life, and they who had done evil to the resurrection of damnation.

So they who had fallen asleep rested in the grave, until the day of Resurrection, only at the end of the world to wake up again from the grave. The soul, so it was imagined, could until that day not be in any other condition, than that which is best represented by thinking of our condition in sleep. Then the body has no count. We hear nothing, we see nothing, we scarcely move, and the soul is withdrawn in itself. The soul then is indeed busy, but only in her dreams. All clear consciousness is wanting and no action goes out from it. She does no labor, she makes no effort, she knows of nothing, she wills nothing, she does nothing.

And that was called "soul-sleep." An unconscious and blank condition. According to one this condition would last forever, according to another it would only be broken, when the voice of Jesus would sound across the graves.

With that representation of a "sleep of the soul"

appeal was also made to Holy Writ. Did not the Psalmist continually make his prayer for deliverance from death, on the ground that in death there is no remembrance? So, to cite a single instance, David in Psalm 6 prays: "Return, O Lord, deliver my soul, i.e., my life, save me (from death) for thy mercies' sake, for in death there is no remembrance of thee, *and who shall praise thee in the grave?*"

Utterances, which are cursorily read with little thought, but which nevertheless stand written, and are every time again repeated.

THAT herewith in the Psalm no doubt about immortality can be intended, as many now make it appear, is already sufficiently evident from what the same David sang in Psalm 16: "Thou wilt not abandon my soul in the grave (hell). Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt make known to me the path of life. Fullness of joy is in thy presence, pleasures are in thy right hand for evermore." Also from what he confessed at the end of Psalm 17, that "the people of the world have their portion in *this life*," but that he knew he would awake, and then would behold God's face in righteousness, eternally to satisfy himself with God's image. And no less finally from what Asaph confessed in Psalm 73: "I shall then continually *be with Thee*. Thou hast taken hold of my right hand and thou wilt lead me by thy counsel, and *afterward take me up into glory*."

But that other: "In death there is no remembrance of thee, who shall praise thee in the grave?" stands also

written, and the question is, what is to be understood by this.

Insight into this depends altogether and solely upon the recognition of God's ordinance in our Creation.

This ordinance is antagonized by him, who contents himself with the simple *life of the soul* after death, and, satisfied with this, is not homesick after something else and something more.

That ordinance over man is, not that we should exist purely spiritually as angels, but that, herein excelling angels, we should have a *two-sided* existence, on one side spiritual and hidden, but also on the other side physical and outward.

Only when we exist after that ordinance, we exist to the full as man. And a man who exists only after the soul, and lacks the body, and hence also has no visible world around him, is halved and as such maimed. From being twofold he is become onefold. He misses his other part. And this is just what was effected by death; dying did this. Reason why by the Resurrection of the body alone death is altogether vanquished again. And reason also why with angels, whether with those that fell, whether with those that remained standing, there *can* be no mention of death and of dying in that sense.

IF this be so, you will also understand, that as man you stand before God in a twofold service. From one side you have to love your God, to honor and to serve Him in the spiritual hiddenness of the life of your soul. But also from the other side you have to confess Him, to

praise and to serve Him before the eyes and ears of others, and thus in the external. Not as though this were done by your body, but in this way, that to this end the soul can not be deprived of the body as instrument. The dumb, blind and deaf experience this in a most painful manner already in this life. The dumb lack the voice to confess and to praise, the deaf do not hear the jubilation of saints.

In this respect he who descends into the grave, undergoes a maiming. He separates temporarily from his body. In this sense he becomes dumb, blind and deaf. He has a spiritual world, like that of angels, in which he exists spiritually after the manner of angels. But he is without his human instrument. He is without his external world. What he is no more able to do is to confess God, praise and serve Him after the fullness of his human personality, after soul and body both.

Of this, the children of our age, and also most believers, have little feeling. Feeling to the full on the part of our human personality with respect to this is too much weakened. We are too deeply sunken in our one-sided Spiritualism. God's creation-ordinance over our being as man does not appeal to us with respect to this with sufficient strength. But a man like David, who had this sense clearly and strongly, to the full was consumed with homesickness at the thought, and therefore he mourned: Who, O Lord, shall praise Thee in the grave?

And this has also a significance for us.

If you dwell onesidedly in the mere life of the soul, then, once you are dead, both the return of Jesus, the resurrection of the flesh, and the new world which then comes, are without significance to you. Then you attach nothing to them. After these your heart has no

more homesickness. Then you do not realize, how thereby alone your full blessedness as man shall be consummated.

When on the other hand that homesickness is alive in your heart again, the knowledge that after death you will find your place prepared in the Father-house truly comforts you, but this does not end things for you. Then the eye of your soul looks further and further, toward that youngest day to come, that illustrious day, when, having become man again to the full after soul and body both, you will love your God, honor, praise, confess and serve Him, both spiritually in the hiddenness of the soul, and outwardly in that new world, which only then discovers itself to you.

“Fashioned Like Unto His Glorious Body”

“THE hour cometh when all that are in the grave, shall hear *His* voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection *of life*, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”

So there is not merely continuance of our soul's existence after death, but there shall some day also be a resurrection *of the flesh*. Being-man to the full demands an existence after soul *and body* both. And with respect to the latter we have the most positive promise, immediately from Christ Himself and mediately from Christ through His apostles: The resurrection of the flesh cometh. The grave shall not triumph.

And not only that our soul obtains back her organ for visible things; but all that fell asleep in Jesus shall receive their body back not as it was taken from them in death, but far richer, more beautiful, more glorious, in brief, it will be a body, as befits the soul of “the just made perfect.” So the holy apostle Paul bore witness to the church at Philippi: “Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change our *humiliated body*, that it may be fashioned like unto His *glorious body*, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (3, 20, 21).

Not as though the resurrection were alone for those that fell asleep in Jesus. “*All* that are in *the graves*” shall once hear the voice of Jesus, and shall

come out from the graves. There is a resurrection *unto life*, but there is also a resurrection, O, terrible thought, a resurrection *unto damnation*.

Yet they, who die without having been incorporated in Christ, may here be excluded from our consideration. They have no part in it, when we meditate on the resurrection of the *glorified* body.

This shall only be the portion of those, who with or without their knowing it, fell asleep in Jesus. Of the aged, who justified by faith, had found peace with their God. But also of the newly budded flower, which died away in the cradle, without ever here below having stammered the “lovely name of Jesus.”

The mortal remains of all of us once become the prey of the grave; altogether indifferent whether that grave is dug for us in the bosom of the earth, or opens itself in the flame of fire that chars us, or discloses itself in the depth of the sea or in the maw of the lion.

Only they, who personally here on earth shall witness the return of Jesus, shall without descending into the grave go into eternity.

But however divergent our dying, and however different our grave may be, for all those who are incorporated in Jesus, the promise stands unshakably sure, that our Lord Jesus Christ shall one day work *a miracle* on their body. *A miracle*, to be brought about by the Divine energy, whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. *A miracle*, consisting in this, that their humiliated body shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body, in which Christ Himself is seated at the right hand of the Father.

THIS mystery of the resurrection of the flesh has from the days of Augustin on little interested the church of Christ. Far from being denied, it has been confessed in all ages, confessed also in our Formulary of Unity; but it did not grip, it was not worked out, it could satisfy neither heart nor head. Our confession merely devotes to it these words: "The souls being joined and united with their proper bodies, in which they formerly lived" (Art. 37), but without referring with so much as a single word to the *glorifying* of the body. Answer 57 in the Heidelberg Catechism contains the slightly more illuminating words: "My body shall be reunited with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ," and answer 45 "The resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge of our resurrection"; yet here also it consists of a simple declaration.

In this there lacks all proportion with Holy Scripture.

In Holy Scripture this mystery of the glorification of the body is elucidated more at length than even many another mystery. Especially the holy apostle Paul puts it in broad outlines in the foreground in his writing to the Church at Corinth, in that to the Church at Philippi and Thessalonica. In the Transfiguration on Tabor this miracle is exhibited to us. And in the appearance of Christ on the way to Damascus and on Patmos it is visualized to us.

It is indeed gain, that the church of this age more than the Church of the Reformation busied itself with this wondrous mystery, and it is a sign of the times, that in the measure in which the unbelieving world more daringly denied all continuance of existence after death as pious fabrication, believing Christendom has defended

the more positively not only the indestructibility of the soul, but also the resurrection of the flesh.

Formerly one was actually content with the continued existence of *half* the man. At present faith demands, on the ground of Holy Scripture, the *whole* man again for eternity, after soul and *body* both.

EVEN so it remains a mystery.

Not the vision of the valley of the dead of Ezekiel 37, but only the apostolic revelation 1 Cor. 15, may direct our meditation on it.

Flesh and blood, i.e., earthly materials, of which our body here consisted, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. But these materials are not really our body. Something which you learn from the fact, that from the cradle to the grave our body remains the same body, while the materials, from which flesh and blood are composed, constantly change. Every seven years this change is so perfectly completed, that in the body of the full-grown man there is no single drop of blood and no single fiber of flesh left, of what there was to him in the cradle.

Hence Resurrection "of the flesh" can not mean what is called "flesh and blood" elsewhere, but is the visible form of our human existence, in distinction from our spiritual existence of soul.

The plant here gives us the clearest image. When winter cold sets in, more than one plant dies above ground, so that only the bulb remains hidden in the earth, but when in springtime the sun shines cherishingly again, from that hidden bulb the same plant comes up

again in new form. With every tulip, with every hyacinth, with all bulbous plants you can observe this. Also the caterpillar remains the same existence, when presently it loses its caterpillar form and comes out in the glorious form of the butterfly.

And that we have the right to observe these signs of nature, Paul himself shows by what he wrote to Corinth. He points to the grain that falls in the earth and dies, and which, after death, from God receives a new body but even so springing up from the grain-kernel. There are earthly bodies and there are heavenly bodies, and every one has its own beauty and its own glory.

So there was a germ also in the seed of your body. From that germ here your body grew, by matter first from motherblood, then from mothermilk, and after that by appropriation of air, drink and food.

At dying all that had sprung from that germ, must wither, but the germ of your body remains. No one can find or indicate that germ of your body in your grave, but God preserves it. He keeps it, till the hour comes of Jesus' return on the clouds. And when that hour is come, Jesus sanctifies and changes that germ of your body, and makes it spring up and bloom anew, even as the hyacinth bulb springs up and blooms anew when the death-sleep of winter is past. And so you obtain then a far more glorious bodily form, and in that glorious body-form soul and body are reunited.

Thus the same body, but different. Full blown from one body-germ, which in your conception you received from your God, but now from purer matter and in more

glorious form. And he who reads what on Patmos St. John saw of the glorified body of Jesus, can form an idea for himself of the glorious form, in which this rising from the dead shall take place. For after the glorious body of Jesus your body also shall be fashioned.

In all this the mystery is not. All this is clearly revealed. Here nothing dark or mysterious is left.

But herein is the mystery, that of this germ of our body we can form no representation, not in the conception, and not while we are alive upon earth, and less yet after death, when all the rest is dissolved and decays, and that germ of the body alone remains and age on age is preserved by God till the coming again of Jesus.

That germ of the body does not belong to the spiritual, but to the visible things. But we lack the ability to observe it. Hence it does not hide in the soul which is with God, but must hide upon earth, yet so, that the mightiest microscope does not discover it.

Resurrection is no descension from heaven. Resurrection is from the earth, in order to enter upon a life in heaven. In the graves that wondrous word of Jesus shall work its effect. That germ of our body, from which the glorious body shall be built up, must therefore be found upon earth.

And on this rests our awed reverence for the acre of the dead. For the mortal remains of our dead is to us not merely the flesh and the blood which becomes the prey of worms and perishes, but much more, that wondrous germ of our body, from which at Jesus' word of might, once that same body shall arise, but then in glorified form.

“*Before the Judgment Seat of Christ*”—I

ALSO he who is fallen asleep in Jesus, is included in the Last Judgment, and is subject to it.

Shortly before His passion in Gethsemane, before He subjected Himself to the human judge and “suffered under Pontius Pilate,” Jesus has in vivid portrayal held up as before the eyes of His disciples how “all peoples shall be gathered before Him, and how He, the Son of man, shall make separation between them, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” And then, so Jesus went on to say, “the Son of man shall put the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left hand, and as King He shall say to those on His right hand: “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25, 34).

Thus all doubt or uncertainty is here excluded, and with the whole church on earth we, too, confess that Jesus “shall come again to judge the quick and *the dead*,” and such, without distinction, as well those who fell asleep *unto life*, as those who died away *into the eternal death*.

In touchingly beautiful language Article 37 of our Reformed Confession gives expression to this, when it says: “And then all men will personally appear before this great Judge, both men and women and children, that have been from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, being summoned by *the voice of the arch-*

angel and by the sound of the trumpet of God. For all the dead shall be raised out of the earth, and their souls joined and united with their proper bodies, in which they formerly lived. As for those, who shall then be living, they shall not die as the others, but be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and from corruptible, become incorruptible. *Then the books* (that is to say the *consciences*) *shall be opened, and the dead judged* according to what they shall have done in this world, whether it be good or evil. Yea all men shall *give an account of every idle word they have spoken*, which the world only counts amusement and jest. And then the secrets and hypocrisy of men shall be disclosed and laid open before all. And therefore the consideration of this judgment, is justly terrible, and dreadful to the wicked and ungodly, but most desirable and comfortable to the righteous and the elect; because then their full deliverance shall be perfected, and they shall receive the fruits of their labor and trouble, which they have borne; their innocence shall be known to all."

This stands here in the fore, because in Holy Scripture God has caused the positiveness of this Last Judgment to be announced to us more definitely than anything else, and such more than once not in brief announcement, but circumstantially and in detail. Thus, not to mention more, wrote the holy apostle Paul in Rom. 2: Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and for-

bearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. For there is no respect of persons with God."

And this Last Judgment always occurs as an actual judgment in the high tribunal, with Christ as Judge, to pronounce judgment. For so it is written: "We must all appear before the *judgment seat of Christ*, that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5, 10).

Even young children that have died in infancy are not excluded from this. Did we not confess with the Baptism of our children, that also "they are conceived and born in sin, and therefore subject to all miseries yea, to condemnation itself"?

They whoever yet speak of "the innocent little ones," how do they reconcile this saying with the fact that also these little ones undergo death? Is not all death sprung from sin?

OF this therefore, that a Last Judgment comes, and that in that last judgment every one of us must appear before Christ, must every time again due mention be made, with all the emphasis that can be laid upon the word, in catechetical classes, in preaching, in exhortation and in meditation.

Especially in times like ours, which more and more swathe *all* judgment, and so also the *Last* Judgment, in haziness and dissolves it in vague, mystical generalities.

The tribunal on earth, so it is said, pronounces no more justice nor judgment of retribution, but sits as a college of guardians for the sake of him who went wrong, to improve him. Also as a college for the protection of society, to render transgressors harmless. Also as a medical society to dispose of the ill-born and half insane, for their good and the good of society.

Can it be wondered at, that also a *Last* Judgment is no more believed? No more believed among thoughtful multitudes. Naturally not among the deniers of Christ. And what is worse, also not among many Christians.

This was effected for them by the spiritualizing, which turned the Last Judgment into a giving of account in one's own conscience, and in no case would longer tolerate an appearing before the judgment seat.

In part it was also effected for them by the Atone-ment itself. There would still be a summary judgment passed upon the lost, but the reconciled in Christ would in no case come any more into Judgment!

YET upon the fact itself of the Judgment depends our whole Confession.

If like the plant we live purely a natural life, there can be no mention of a judgment. When you cut out dead branches from a tree or otherwise prune it, no one calls it judgment. When Jesus said that the tree without fruit must be hewn down, it was metaphorical language. Is ours on the other hand besides natural, also a *moral* life, then from this directly follows responsibility and accountability. And accountability always presupposes a judge whom you owe an account. An account which runs out into nothing and becomes a mere show, except as approval or disapproval follows the given account.

So on the existence or non-existence of a judgment depends all our higher condition as man. On it depends the whole moral worldorder. On it depends the righteousness of God. By it stands or falls the Majesty of the Lord JEHOVAH, as He Whose right it is to command and therefore also to judge us.

So deeply has this indispensableness of judgment been engraven in our heart, that we ourselves constantly pass judgment upon each other's doings and not-doings; that without judgment no family ever survived; that there is no people known without a court of justice; and that we continually pass judgment upon ourselves in the conscience. And this self-judgment in the conscience, what is this other than being judged in the conscience by our God.

Yet even on earth this particular and personal judgment is not enough. As soon as it concerns a word of slander or wrong deed of a more serious character and public notoriety, we are not satisfied, until by one in authority judgment is passed and publicly announced.

The moral worldorder, and the justice inseparably

connected with it, are no private fads, but concern every one, concern the public conscience, concern the foundations of human society.

When judgment stumbles, sings the Psalmist, all foundations are overthrown. And when the guilty go out free, says he elsewhere, "all the foundations of the earth totter."

THEREFORE we speak of a *Last Judgment*, thereby ourselves testifying that all sorts of other judgments precede it.

Surely, Jesus said: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." You are not seated as judge appointed by Divine authority. You lack the means, which the judge has at command to investigate guilt. If then you make it seem, as though you were judge, you presume upon what is not your own. And also, because another fell into sin, you, who by grace were kept, should not hypocritically exalt yourself above him. He who searches the heart, condemns you perchance more sternly than the man whom you would condemn. He who is clothed with humility, keeps himself far distant from all such haughty passing of judgment.

"For who art thou, O man, that judgest another, for thou that judgest others, doest the same things, and we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things" (Rom. 2, 1, 2).

But with this reservation, human judgment conformable to duty is already of many sorts. Judgment of the father upon his family, of the housewife upon

her servants, of employer upon employees. In like manner the judgment of public conscience upon public persons, even upon peoples and governments. And above all the judgment of the judge in authority, who sits in God's seat, to maintain justice upon earth.

STILL all human judgment remains imperfect. It can never fully satisfy our thirst after justice. We know that a great many crimes are committed in secret, or in such crafty and cunning ways, that the human tribunal can bring no just retribution upon them.

Must then upon this broad level injustice forever go out free? Is it right that the man who steals a garment, goes to prison, and the moneywolf who steals gold-mines, is overladen with demonstrations of honor?

And also, the human judge is *fallible*. Guilty are declared free, innocents are condemned, even sentenced and punished with death at the stake, or on the scaffold. Forget not your martyrs!

Must not this injustice be avenged? Must there be no reparation of the justice which the judge himself abandoned as a prey to craftiness or violated by blunder and neglect? Does not everything that is in you rage against every assertion, as though all this must eternally remain as it is? Does not the outraged conscience call upon the people's sense of justice for a higher, for a better, for a *Divine tribunal*, which once shall make reparation for all the blunders and all the neglect of the human tribunal?

And if so, is there then to this cry of the human heart which can not be smothered ever another answer

thinkable, than that once there comes the *Last Judgment*, the judgment of *God Himself*, and therein the judgment after the standard of an unimpeachable *Right?*

“*Before the Judgment Seat of Christ*”—II

THE representation of the Last Judgment with respect to those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, is not altogether clear.

It is certain, that also the redeemed and the blessed shall appear before Christ as Judge. Jesus’ own portrayal shows this. His apostle declares it in so many words in Rom. 14, 10, where he exhorts the Christians at Rome to tenderness in their association with the brethren, and urges this upon them for the reason: That we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

It must therefore not be taken, as though in the Last Judgment the blessed shall stand merely as spectators or witnesses. “To be placed *before the judgment seat*” surely means, that oneself is subjected to the judgment.

In what Jesus said about the sheep and goats, is indeed a *twofold* sort of sentence. A sentence of *acquittal* for the blessed, and a sentence of *condemnation* for those who have not sought peace through the blood of the Cross.

More or less divergent from this, on the other hand, is the other representation, which is equally positively given in Holy Scripture, that they, who belong to Jesus, shall themselves sit with Jesus as *Judges*.

So spake Jesus, that they, who had followed Him, presently, when the hour strikes for the regeneration

of the whole world, shall sit with Him upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The holy Apostle testifies, that we shall judge the angels. And on Patmos St. John sees, how they, that had been beheaded, for the witness of Jesus, sat on thrones, and how "judgment was given them."

So these two stand side by side. From one side it is revealed unto us, that not only unbelievers, but also believers, shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, as accused and indited, who shall receive their sentence of acquittal and their glorious reward. But also from the other side, that believers with Christ shall sit as judges, and themselves will take part in the pronouncement of sentence.

To reconcile this twofold representation is only possible in this way, that, as Jesus emphatically teaches, first the sentence of acquittal shall be passed upon believers, and that, after their acquittal is announced, they shall sit with Him as judges, to pass Judgment upon those who died *without* Jesus.

It has indeed been said: "You must not take all this literally, and it is enough when you read from it, that he who fell asleep in Jesus, as child of God, one with Christ, judges the sinner, but himself also as past sinner has need of open acquittal." But we doubt whether Holy Scripture justifies this. For with respect to the Last Judgment itself the prophetic description in Holy Scripture is so sharply outlined and so ample in detail, that every metaphorical interpretation is excluded.

There shall be a Last Judgment. Judges shall sit in judgment. And sentences shall be passed.

He who weakens all this and glosses it over in

spiritual perceptions, does very positive wrong to the revelation of Holy Scripture.

STILL we should be on our guard, by inventions of our imagination on our part not to analyze the portrayal more closely. Artists of song and pencil may have endeavored to do this, our faith must needs keep itself far distant from this.

To ask how those numberless and numberless millions shall find standing room before the tribunal; how it is thinkable that every one's whole life shall be revealed; how endlessly long such pronouncements of justice must last; how there can be mention of a public sentence pronouncement, audible to all; and so much more, is no right of ours. Guesswork here is of no avail. All that is good for us and necessary to know, is revealed unto us. And we shall not therefore step across the boundaries of this revelation. In the conditions which shall then ensue, every relation shall become so altogether different from what it is now; observation and fellowship shall bear such an altogether different character; that every conception, indeed, of what it then shall be, fails us anyhow. What Jesus says, that even of idle words that we have spoken, we shall have to give account, very far transcends all our understanding. And yet here stands the question: Would Jesus have declared this so positively, if actually it were to end in nothing?

The very spiritualization of everything that pertains to the Last Judgment, has brought about, that the larger majority of people have ceased to count with that Last Judgment as with an actual event, while Jesus

and the apostles, on the other hand, have left no means untried, to place it before us as actually and really as can possibly be imagined.

WHETHER then they who fell asleep in Jesus, are not already justified? How then is it possible, that he who already received the acquittal, still comes into the judgment? To this objection there is a ready answer.

The acquittal here runs through several stages. First the acquittal in the mind of the Judge. This is the intention to declare one free. That therefore, which from all eternity has been called justification. It is not later on that God for the first comes to the discovery, that you must be declared free. The facts on which the acquittal shall have to rest, do not only later on become known to Him. On the contrary, all the grounds of the sentence of your acquittal are present in the eternal purpose. You, as one that shall be declared free, are known of your God from all eternity.

An entirely other stage in your justification is, when in conversion the sentence of condemnation casts you down, and now in faith the sentence of acquittal is testified to your soul and is accepted by you with everlasting jubilation. This is the subjective justification by faith.

Then God knows it, and you know it. But even so it has not yet become a public acquittal, and with every sentence this is absolutely indispensable. A secret sentence of acquittal or condemnation can never be other than provisional.

And therefore follows at length justification in its

highest development, which is not in the hidden knowledge of God, nor in the equally hidden knowledge of faith, but in the hearing of all ears, in public, in full sight of the whole world and of all the angels.

Only that acquittal, that justification in its highest stage at the Last Judgment decides and closes the case.

When in His eternal purpose God counted you just there stood over against it, that you were nevertheless to be conceived and born in sin. When you were justified by faith, there stood over against it, that indwelling sin was not as yet taken away from you. And only in the Last Judgment, before all ears, you will be pronounced just after it has convincingly become evident in the sight of all, that you are just.

Just, because then there will be no more sin in you, and because the price of the redemption of your soul for your original sin and your "actual" sins shall be ready in the finished work of Christ, and the perfect fulfilling of the law by Christ shall be counted as your own.

First made just in the purpose of God, after that made just by faith, you will only then stand as a just person in public sight.

AND what else shall be glorified therein, than the work of God's eternal compassions to your soul and to your whole person?

Satan accuses you, the world accuses you, your own conscience witnesses against you. How then can you be justified and obtain acquittal, except as God

closes His eye to your sin, and thus really pronounces just contrary to justice?

Well, the Last Judgment shall make answer to this. It shall then appear, in such a way, that neither Satan nor the world can make their denial heard, that God's compassions have operated so wondrously in grace, that according to strictest justice you *can* no more be condemned and that your acquittal does not darken God's justice, but brings it out in clearest light.

The loss, therefore, is so pitiful to the spiritual life, that also among Christians the all-dominating confession of justification is darkened.

It is nothing but spiritual egoism. It is mere asking, how do I become holy, and no more asking, how does God come into His own also with respect to *my* person. It is being more concerned about one's own salvation, than about the honor of God's right.

And do you ask, whether the public revelation of our life will not bring pain, be it answered: Yes, if this were to take place upon earth. But positively no, when the wondrous power of God's compassion will be manifest in this, that it has not merely forgiven and reconciled such sinful persons, as we ourselves were, but also after sternest justice in His judgment has made us just.

They who have fallen asleep in Jesus, long for that Judgment and do not fear it. For only that Last Judgment shall prove the full triumph of God's grace, and at the same time the full triumph of our own struggle with Satan, sin and the world.

XLV

“There Shall Be Wailing and Gnashing of Teeth”

WHAT comes, when by death the light in man's eye is extinguished, no one of us knows from experience, and equally little can any one make it out from his nature. A strong surmise, that death does not end all, may be derivable from nature, from history and conscience, but even this surmisal differs far from *certainty*. Certain knowledge of what awaits us after death, God Himself alone could give you by revelation. Revelation about this, therefore, you have in abounding measure, not least by God's Only Begotten Son, Who first is come down from heaven, then Himself has undergone death, after that arose, and then ascended again into heaven.

That Unique Only Begotten Son of God Who came down from heaven, and returned to heaven, has not once, but repeatedly assured us, that he who dies outside of faith, and thus dies in his sins, is forever cast out into outer darkness.

And notwithstanding this, scholars who know nothing of it, now assert, that this is not so. They contradict Jesus in the face. They persuade the great multitudes no more to believe it. And a number of confessors of Christ, here and abroad, hasten, be it with reserve, to underwrite this denial on the part of unbelieving scholars.

So they deem to have rid themselves of hell. Even in preaching there is scarcely so much as a whisper

abroad of hell. And the outcome is, that thousands and again thousands die away indifferently, thoughtlessly, or with a false hope, and that the most striking warning of Jesus has no more hold upon their heart.

WHAT now in the face of this denial of an eternal misery, is the ground on which one founds his denial?

With all those who still count with an all-directing God it is this: That it does not harmonize with the God-idea, and particularly with the love of God, to let the world's course end with such a terrible outcome.

This, however, contradicts itself.

Ask these selfsame scholars, what Jesus' high excellency was, and they answer: His pure knowledge of God. Even Jesus' maxims they criticize. But this one thing they leave to the Savior's credit, that His was a fellowship with God, so pious, so intimate and so tender, that at this point He remains revelation and rule of action.

And see, while to this same Jesus, Whose knowledge of God according to their own concession was the most perfect, the representations of an eternal misery perfectly harmonized with His idea of God and with the love of God, they maintain that this can not be so, that it is unthinkable, that it can not be reconciled and that it is absurdity itself.

One then makes of it, that after death the development here begun goes on. A second, that also after death there is still opportunity for conversion. A third, that after death bitter suffering, for a certain period, will be the just means to reconcile with God those who

have died without God. And a fourth, that there are such as shall never succeed, but that these shall be annihilated, so that they shall no more exist; which is then called: conditional immortality. Immortality alone for those who here or hereafter convert themselves, but annihilation and ceasing to exist for those who conscienceless, here and hereafter, continue to harden themselves against God.

Is it asked, whether we have no sympathy with this? Whether we would not wish a good deal, that it were so? Whether the representation of an eternal wretchedness does not make us shudder with horror? And whether it does not cost us pain to reconcile that never ending antithesis of thousands and yet again thousands of miseries with God's boundless compassion?—we answer all these questions with an unconditional yes.

Most preferably we cling fast to what Calvin wrote regarding the miscreant, who in France had shed royal blood, that we never know, what in the last sob God yet doeth to those, who seem to us to die far distant from God.

But further than this we can and may not go.

Jesus alone has here full right of speech. Of ourselves we know nothing about it. To imagine, that we should cherish higher and purer ideas about God and His love than Jesus, we do not presume. And equally little do we assume the right to apply an utterance such as: "that once God shall be all and in all" to every man, and not exclusively to the mystical body of Christ,

in direct contradiction to what the Holy Apostle constantly testifies. Of the play with the word “dying,” as when Jesus says, “that they shall die in their sins” we do not even say anything here. Conditional immortality can be maintained *contrary to* Scripture,—taught *from* Scripture and on the ground of Scripture, never. They who deem that they can do this, show that they do not begin to know, what in Scripture *death* and *dying* is.

WITH respect to this you have to hold fast to Jesus and depend upon Jesus’ teaching, or else you know nothing, and are not even able to stammer.

And Jesus spoke about this, time and again, with the greatest positiveness.

They, who die without God, shall go into the eternal pain. They shall be cast out. In them the worm shall gnaw which never dies. They will suffer anguish by a fire that shall never be extinguished. And this never-ending condition shall be so dreadful, that Jesus says of it that there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Math. 13, 42). This last terrible portrayal alone Jesus has repeated even thrice.

In the portrayal of the Last Judgment Jesus has again confirmed this after this fashion, that in that hour He will say to the lost: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

His apostle repeats it, that “we Christians know, that they who do not obey the truth, shall be recompensed indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man, that doeth evil” (Rom. 2, 8).

Even on the last page of Holy Writ we are told, that in a vision given him by Jesus St. John on Patmos saw, that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20, 15).

Is it not plain and clear as day, that he who still says that this shall not be so, shows that he neither believes in Scripture, nor in Jesus?

And clearer than day at the same time, that he who borrows his knowledge of eternal things from Scripture, and deems that Jesus can not lie, can not and must not represent this matter to himself otherwise, than that there shall be indeed, very really, a hell and an eternal misery.

To say, it is not genuine piety, to seek God and to believe in Jesus to escape hell, is equally an urge to be wiser than the Scripture.

Surely, the Scripture teaches, that our highest desire must be, not to be safely sheltered for ourselves, but eternally to be satisfied with God's image. (Ps. 17, 15).

But this deep longing of the soul, however exalted in him who *is* transposed from death into life, has no hold yet on the sinner. And therefore to sinners Jesus comes to save them from perdition. "So God loved the world, that He gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him, *should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

And this is the effect, which the certainty of an eternal misery must still have.

It must urge father and mother, not by neglect

of Christian training to leave the child of their love a prey to eternal perdition.

It must urge believers of every sort of standing, rank and age, not to leave their friends, to whose heart they have an approach, to die without Jesus.

It must urge the church of Christ, by preaching and missions to save from perdition and to exhort to conversion.

The same love of God which made Him send His Son, that sinners should not perish, but come to eternal life, must also stimulate, inspire, prompt us.

The love of Christ must constrain us.

For does it not witness in a dreadful way against the coldness of your love, when you leave a child, a brother, a friend of your heart, any one whom you can reach, to die away quietly into eternal misery, because you would not believe, on Jesus' authority, that there is wailing and gnashing of teeth, a fire, that shall never be quenched?

Nothing witnesses more strongly against the seriousness of many Christians than the cold indifference, with which they stand at the deathbed of unbelieving members of the household or family or friends, even when before their dying they observe no single sign of faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

*“The Earth, and the Works, That Are Therein,
Shall Be Burned up”*

HOWEVER gigantic the dimensions, both of all land and all sea, on this earth may seem to us, yet the whole earth is infinitesimally small compared with the sun. And as the sun is, so there are thousands and ten thousands of fixed stars. And however far the human eye has traveled to study those fixed stars, the end of the universe has never yet been discovered.

God’s majesty is so endlessly, so namelessly great, and we, (of the Netherlands) who already lose ourselves in our small country upon that small earth in our insignificance, what are we before Him Who by one word of power called that Universe into existence, and likewise again by one word of that same Almighty-ness shall make it turn and change in fashion and form of existence!

Already the Psalmist was impressed by that overwhelming thought, when he sang: “Of old Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt remain standing. And they shall all wax old as a garment. Thou shalt change them and as a vesture they shall be changed” (102, 25).

With Isaiah it reads the same: “All the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their hosts shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and

as a falling fig from the fig tree" (Isaiah 34, 4).

And over that "change" of heaven and earth Jehovah triumphs, as He Himself testifies to His servant: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment; but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be broken" (Is. 51, 6).

So also the apostle of the Lord declares unto us: "The world passeth away with everything desirable it has before our eye, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 Jno. 2, 17). And though here we can not reproduce the broad portrayal of the vision of Patmos, clearly and circumstantially also another apostle testifies to us, that they who belong to Jesus, "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; that once the heavens, which now are, and the earth by the same word, that once created this world, shall be surrendered to fire; and that then the heavens shall be dissolved, and the elements burning shall melt, and the earth and the works, that are therein, shall be brought to nought" (2 Peter 3:7, 11, 12, 13).

This has been called a world conflagration, and a world conflagration it shall be, and only from that world conflagration shall that new form appear, in which the realm of glory shall eternally and always glisten.

THIS can no more sound strangely in our ears, for already the past tells us of such dreadful changes, which in former ages, have taken place upon this earth, that no one of us would recognize the present form of the

world, if his eye were able to see what this world has been.

Also the investigators of the earthcrust and the searchers of the firmament themselves concede, that an entire change in the form of this world belongs in every way to the probabilities, only diverging in this, that one foresees a cooling off and a freezing to death of all life upon earth, while the other, with the Scripture, thinks of a final destruction by fire.

Already now we walk on fire. Fire vomiting mountains, hot springs, ascending gases, it all gives the certainty, that underneath the thin earthcrust, on which we live, one glowing mass hides itself, which by a wider breach would merely need to receive air, to burst out into flames, and start the great world conflagration.

Yet what Scripture announces as coming is still more majestic: not only a bursting into flame of this small earth, but one great, one mighty cataclysmic turning upside down of all the starry hosts. A break in the whole order of the stars in their courses, accompanied by a friction of all matter and gases, only from this wholesale whirling about of all existing things, to have an entirely new order come forth, a far more glorious world, a still thousand times more beautiful universe.

And what ends all, this Scripture prophesies, not to satisfy our curiosity, neither to prepare us for terrible things to come, but, altogether otherwise, to wean us from the false attachment to the less beautiful of this form of the world, and to fix the eye of our soul upon that far more majestic glory, which once awaits all who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

Our ideal stands so much higher than the highest this world can offer us. They who are not incorporated

in Jesus are infatuated with the beauty of *this* world, which now is, as though nothing could excel it. To the holy apostle, on the other hand, every creature in *this* world groans, because it is subjected to vanity, and as with uplifted head awaits that far more beautiful, that far richer glory, which only comes, when the liberty of the children of God shall dawn.

And therefore it is one calling, one warning throughout all Scripture: Give not to *this* world your heart, but look to the far more glorious inheritance, which is laid up for you and which is kept for you in the heavens.

This world passeth away, with all the desirables it offers you, and then comes the *new* heaven and the *new earth*.

What manner of people then, O ye children of God, ought ye to be, in holy, heavenly walk?

INCOMPREHENSIBLE to us such a "change" of existing things is not.

Scripture itself compares it to the change of a garment, which, worn out and soiled, is no more sightly, and is fit to be cast off, and now by the fuller's hand is so effectively purified and renovated, that it comes back to you in all its former beauty and as new to the eye.

And also, we know the purifying, the renewing of pieces of metal by fire. Rusty and unsightly iron-work regains in fire its newness and brightness, and thus melted in fire and cast into a new mold, glistens again before the eye in its metal fairness and intactness of form.

And why should not God be able to do with all His world, what the fuller does with the garment and the iron-founder with the piece of metal work?

True, the greatness of the range, the extensiveness of the dimensions, the giganticness of the firmament, make us dizzy. But does not God Almighty stand far higher above all the work of His creation than the fuller above his washtub or the smith above his forge?

He who can make anything, can also remake it. He Who can create, can also re-create. And however majestic in its greatness the universe may seem to us, before God it is deemed as nothing. Are not the nations to Him as a drop of water on a bucket, or as a dust in the scales?

And have you not thought sometime, that however great the world may be, God Himself is still ten and a hundred times greater than that whole world, yea, that even so you have but *stammered* of the greatness of your God? What then shall there be wonderful in it for your God, to melt as one mighty instrument *that whole universe*, and presently rejuvenated, renewed and cast into a still more glorious form, to place it before Himself and before His saints?

WITH us lies the fault, that in the main we cherish thoughts far too great of this world, and far too small of the Lord our God.

Not only people of the world do this, but also Christian people, too inert of spirit, to meditate on the glory of their inheritances, or to inlive what Scripture prophecies so clearly and circumstantially.

Surely, you should not underestimate your calling in the things of this world, much less neglect them. So long as God leaves you in this dispensation, you have in *this* dispensation to serve your God, diligently and faithfully.

But with all this it must ever stand clearly before your eyes, that not only this earth but also *all her works* shall perish. Most beautiful palaces, most imposing cathedrals, wonders of technics, greatest creations of art, every house, every village, all cities, and everything that human hand has wrought therein,—it is merely for a time, and as once Babylon and Nineveh went to nought, so likewise presently everything our wondrous age created goes to nought.

And therefore, you must be diligent and also faithful in the work here given you to do, but you must not permanently attach yourself to it. You must not attach yourself to it. You should understand and see, that what now glitters before us, is merely yet the flickering of candlegleam, compared to that sunny splendor of glory, in which once the whole creation of God shall be immersed.

Here this little glory for a time; yonder once the *full* glory, and that forever! Thus stands the choice.

Why hesitancy still on the part of God's saints?

Your ideal *can* not lie in what ages and once changes, in what God shall once melt. It *must* lie in what shall then begin, when your God shall have brought His re-creation to a finish.

XLVII

"That I Should Bury My Dead"

DEATH is and remains the most repulsive and unnatural phenomenon in our human life.

There is a symbolic dying also in nature, when cold makes flower and leaf die away, but in the yellow of that leaf there is a beauty of its own, in the autumn tints of foliage there is a wealth of color, the *feuille-morte* attracts.

But death, as it breaks out in human life, is not like this. A human corpse can remain beautiful a single day and express an heightened purity, as the tension of nerves and muscles no longer weary the face, but even that beauty lasts, O, for so short a time, and scarcely does dissolution begin its destructive work, when the corpse no longer attracts, but rather repels.

And yet human sympathy has surrounded that dissolving corpse, in spite of its uncleanness, which forbade the high priest even to touch it, with tender care and mournful love.

With more than one nation the tendency was abroad, even as in our times again, to abandon the corpse to fire heat, and to save the ashes in an urn. But from the days of Israel, the people of the Lord ever held fast to the honor of interment.

That interment harmonizes with nature, and nature with interment, for science of the soil teaches, that nothing is so adapted to assimilate into itself, that which dissolves itself from the body, and to purify it, as the

earth, which our foot treads. It is as though God has disposed that wondrous ground to the reception of our dead body.

Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return, is the judgment passed upon us, and to earth is committed the task, for which in every way she is so well equipped, to consummate the dissolution of our mortal remains.

THE people, among which the ceremonials of burial were developed most lavishly, even too much so, dwelt in Egypt. Alongside cities for the living, they built great Necropolises, which are cities for the dead. Also in those cities of the dead there were streets, and along those streets every family had an house of its own for their dead, and in that house their dead were put by, embalmed, swathed in linen, encased in carved woodwork, and put away in marble or freestone sarcophagi.

Even now such mummies can be found in our museums, not infrequently after more than three thousand years still so unmarred and perfect, that it seems as though it were but yesterday that they were put by.

In this faith in the resurrection of the dead expressed itself, but without the sense of sin. It was a vain effort to withdraw itself from the dreadful judgment of dissolution, and want of faith in that Almighty of God, which can restore again what perished, and makes the dead alive, and calls the things which no more are, as though they still were.

But still that tender, be it exaggerated care for the body of the dead had its good side. A reverence for the

human expressed itself in this, a reconciling of oneself with the seriousness of death.

Now God has so appointed it, that Abraham, the spiritual father of us all, who may believe, has dwelt among that people in Egypt; that the ancient people of God tarried for several centuries in the land of Egypt, and with so much more it is surely owing to this of God intended circumstance, that burial of our dead ever remained in honor among Christians.

The first time Holy Scripture makes mention of the care for our dead, we hear, how the old patriarch pleads for a grave for his dead.

God had blessed Abraham so richly. He had the wife of his love until her one-hundred-twenty-and-seventh year. And then the aged patriarch came "to mourn and to weep for her." And after that mourning he bought from Ephron in the cave of Machpelah a modest grave for Sarah (Gen. 23, 8).

Since then throughout all ages the grave was held in honor by Israel, until He came, Who to deliver us from our sin and guilt, went into bitter death; and He also was put by in a cave, and by so being buried Himself, has for His saints forever honored the grave.

BUT those graves in Egypt, that grave of Machpelah, that grave of Jesus, all bore the mark of quiet, sacred seriousness, and every attempt to camouflage the grave remained averted.

You read of no festoons and of no wreaths of flowers. The somber-gray must fully and forcibly allow the bitterness of death to express itself. At the grave

death was not to be made unrecognizable, nor charmed away. He who visited the grave had to know and perceive and feel that he trod the acre of death, and have the seriousness which resounds from the grave penetrate deep into the soul.

The grave had to be a messenger from God, and thereby a voice in our midst that calls unto life.

There can be jubilation at the grave of sacred joy over the assurance of everlasting life. The palm-branch, engraven in stone, can be symbol of triumph, the ear of corn the emblem of resurrection. But bridal ornaments, which make death to be forgotten, does not belong at the grave.

The sin which in our age the world commits with respect to this, is inward cowardice, because it dares not look death in the face.

Our fathers have never offended in this.

Quiet simplicity and sober seriousness was the cloak that covered their graves. And he who does not wish to take part in the play of the world, still holds himself fast to that seriousness of the fathers.

FOR this reason the erection of images, the chiseling of laudatory inscriptions, and even man-extolling addresses, have ever from of old at our graves been avoided.

The grave declares so eloquently, how small and insignificant helpless man is, and how terribly great in His Almightyness the Lord our God is.

Powerless our dead died away in death, and almost still more painfully powerless we stood by their deathbed side.

Never are we so deeply humiliated in our powerlessness, as when death climbs in at our windows. Then no energy of the dying is of any more help, and no passion of helpful love, and no art of the most skillful physician. All human capacity succumbs and sinks in, and God alone in His terrifying Majesty is great.

And this comes to expression in the grave.

First there is still some tender care, which is devoted to the sacred remains of our dead. We would like to keep their dead body with us. Still do something for their good.

But this also disappoints, and soon the moment is come, that we carry out our dead, and as symbol of our uttermost humiliation, make their body sink away deep down in the grave, cover it over with earth, then to turn homeward, without the pledge of love which was as it were inwoven in our heart.

Would you in such a moment burn incense to man, on such a sacred spot raise a monument of human greatness?

This indeed would be repugnant to the faith.

If needs be let one kneel at the grave, and give vent to the sorrow of his heart. But at the open grave and on the acre of the dead be great alone, God the Almighty, Who is Lord of life and death, *and He alone.*

THE grave urges this the more, because back of the grave there is still so much higher seriousness, than the grave itself casts upon the heart.

The grave is not the end. Once all graves shall be opened. The grave is as a vestibule, which brings us

to the judgment, that once by Christ shall be passed upon all the dead.

The grave indeed closes the life, but does not cut off the account, which we shall have to give regarding that life before the judgment seat of Christ.

With dying we pass out from this life, but the photograph of that life goes with us, of all our life, from earliest youth, to the day of our death.

And this character of the grave, that it is the vestibule of the judgment seat of Christ, portrays its inexorable seriousness in fullness of compass. So long as the grave merely speaks of dying, it rouses melancholy and makes tender by sorrow. But as vestibule of the judgment seat of Christ it disquiets the conscience so sacredly and wholesomely. A speech of God goes out from it, which makes one break with sin, which impels renewal of conversion, and so makes us number our days, which God still grants us, that we might at length expel all folly from our heart, to obtain a wise heart, a heart, wise before God.

AND yet the end of that "speech of the grave," is not terror, provided you do not pass over in superficiality, even what was sinful in your beloved dead, whom you carry out. Even the most saintly, who died away from our midst, had but a small beginning of that obedience acceptable to God, and the best of our dead supplicated on their deathbed most touchingly for grace.

Hereby at the grave of your dead God the Lord is so wonderfully magnified in the holy work of His Atonement.

In us nothing, and also in our beloved dead nothing, but in their heart when they died and in our heart, who weep at their grave, a spark aglow of the love of Christ.

Of Him, Who was dead for us, Who is also quickened, Who also sits at the right hand of God, Who also prays for us.

And then that coming judgment no longer terrifies. For who is He who in the judgment alone shall condemn and can? It is Christ, that Christ of Whose love a small spark, be it ever so little, is aglow in our heart.

And then we glory, regarding our dead and ourselves: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?—and the heart triumphs at our graves, because it is assured, by faith so fixedly and fervently assured, that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, *our Lord*.

XLVIII

“The Lord is Among Them That Uphold My Soul”

WHEN it is said of the Lord our God, that in sorrow He *upholds* the suffering soul, you should not understand this of His ordinary Almightyness, whereby He carries the life of our soul, also in the days of great happiness.

There is mention here of a *support*, as balance against a power of suffering, that presses down our soul, and threatens to make her succumb.

God truly *carries* all things by the word of His power. But yet in nature plant and tree are so disposed, that they need no upholding from without. In wild woods you put no sticks by young growing trees, and the chick runs away on legs of its own, so soon as it comes from the shell. The animal can not put apronstrings around its young nor take it by the hand and teach it to walk.

Only with man the possibility of being upheld is founded in his nature. A child does not learn to walk of itself. It learns to walk by mother, who upholds it.

This is far finer than what you observe with plant and animal. It betrays far richer life, a life susceptible to all sorts of fluctuations and changes, intended to pass through a multiplicity of conditions, and, in accordance with these conditions, disposed in other ways to be assisted.

In case of injury or accident you observe the same. The mare stands helplessly by the side of the colt that

broke its leg. With people we take him who hurt himself and fell down, by the arm, and help him along by our support. True, there are animals which in such a case take their young by the mouth in the neck, and drag it along, but *upholding*, in all the rich, fine sense of the word, is something that occurs *among people* alone.

But this very "upholding" presupposes, that in ordinary times you go on your own feet, that you hold yourself up, and would laugh at support, that any one would offer you.

Not of yourself, always by God's power of course, but yet so, that God's power works energy in you, and that, thanks to that energy, you hold yourself up, and thanks to the power given you, *without support* you pursue your way.

This is the ordinary in our life. When such is the case with us, we are normal. And he who is truly pious, thanks his God every morning and every evening, when that ordinary ability of going *without support*, is granted and continued.

BUT that desired condition can change.

Directly after the body, when we injure our foot, or a fractured bone makes going impossible, or serious sickness so weakens us, that the knees give way and can no more carry the body.

In great old age this weakened condition can even become the ordinary one, when the grasshopper, as the Preacher says, shall be a burden, that he fears a height and there is terror in the way.

Then it becomes as in the days of childhood. Then

an apronstring, now a crutch or cane. Then mother's hand, now the shoulder of son or daughter, on which *to lean*.

Always that real human *leaning* and being *upheld*, prophesied in the child, in the day of old age so significantly experienced, and between cradle and grave every time occurring, when disease or accident breaks our ordinary power.

And Scripture transfers this also to the *life of our soul*.

Our soul is outlined in the body, and only in images borrowed from the body, are we able to give ourselves an account of the life of our soul.

So then is man's soul destined, to hold itself up, to be master over itself, and to direct itself. By power given of God, naturally. But yet to stand and to go by indwelling power, as the trunk of the oak stands by the hardness of its wood, and the lion goes by the strength of his strong muscles.

But also with the soul of man like difference with the soul of the animal. With the young animal no support is known, with the young child support by training and education is indispensable. The spider born with the web-diploma and the bee with the comb-diploma. The young man only able by the support and leadership of others to obtain his art-diploma. There the instinct, which knows no support, here the laborious acquisition, which apart from support is unthinkable.

In gray old age, when the childish state begins, like helplessness.

And in the days and years that lie in between, likewise every time the events, which shock the soul so bitterly and fearsomely, that she supplicates for assist-

ance. We call this the seeking after comfort, the home-sickness after sympathy, depending and leaning on another who saves her from insinking.

WHY art thou *cast down*, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?—such is the disposition of the soul, when the hour draws near, which calls for human and Divine upholding.

What held you up was your faith, your peace with God. But now Satan ensnares you and you fall into sin. And in place of what must hold you up, comes grievous contrition, and the burden of your sin weighs you down.

What upheld you was your conviction of being in God's way and of fighting for His cause.

But now God does not go up with you to battle. Your adversary overcomes and treads you underfoot. Doubt takes possession of your soul, and in despondency you threaten to succumb.

Your work was your delight. To exert yourself in behalf of your family the joy of your life. But reverses hit you. Labor is in vain. Financial despair takes hold of your heart. And as paralyzed the vigor of your soul lies down.

Or again, your quiet family, and the life of your home with your own life, was your refreshing, a tent of light round about you. It upheld you, dripped oil in the fibers of your inner existence. And now the devastation of disease knocks on your door, and you must let it in; and death climbs in by your window, and grief and mourning grip your heart.

Then strength fails you. Then trembling comes upon your soul, so that you lose direction and course. Then it is as though the foundations are broken away from under the life of your soul, and an abyss opens itself beneath you, in which you fear to sink away. Even the light on your pathway is darkened, and all that is within you is cast down. You weep, and weeping gives release, but yet makes the waves of your downheartedness beat the more violently against your breast. You feel yourself as abandoned to a power of desolateness of heart, against which you have no resistance. And however much you try to lift yourself up, you every time fall down again.

Your nobility! For only as man, and as man of fine feeling, can you be cast down.

But your nobility likewise, because only so as man you become an object of Divine Compassion, and because in that compassion your God glorifies Himself in you.

AND then God sends you brothers and sisters who uphold your soul, and among those that uphold your soul He comes Himself (Ps. 54, 4, Dutch ver.).

But always to you as *man*.

There are three things which must then uphold you and keep you from sinking away: Your own effort, human sympathy, Divine compassion.

First *your own effort*.

Not permit yourself as a stock or stone to swoon down in the woundedness of your heart. You must will to be lifted up, and never let sentimentality in your

sorrow steal into your mind. That would be opposing God.

Therefore God's Word begins by saying: "*Be strong*, and He shall strengthen thine heart." And therefore the melancholy rebuke in Psalms 42 and 43: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me. Hope thou in God!"

So one says to the invalid, whom one wants to lift up in bed: "You must help a bit," and only that exertion frequently makes the lifting possible.

Therein is the honor of man, that faith still struggles to stand up, even though the foot every time slips again. What he wants, is not as a will-less weight to be dragged, but as a struggling child to be *supported* and *upheld*.

For *upholding* presupposes that you take hold of yourself, and assisted by that support, yourself hope to make progress.

The living man receives help. The dead are not upheld, but carried out.

BUT then that support comes, and God sends you those who uphold your soul.

Some do this from afar, others closer by, a very few very close by. But you are aware, how the hand of every one is stretched out toward you, to be of assistance to you and count themselves happy to be permitted to do it.

The *sympathy* of humanity. The *suffering with* you on the part of friends and relatives. The taking from

you of a part of your suffering by those who are *very near* to you.

With one this is more necessary than with another, because the effect of sorrow is so different. Sometimes it is trembling and shaking, sometimes little more than quietly standing appalled. This depends on temperament and difference of feeling.

But they who come to your help are readily aware of this, and according to the measure of the danger of your succumbing, they double the assistance they offer you. At first it is almost a carrying. Then they let go a little, to see, that you lift up yourself again. And the true friend rejoices, when he observes that support is less and less necessary, and then unobservedly withdraws it. Forcing of friendship upon one or of assistance that has become superfluous, does not comfort, but annoys.

AND now in the third place among those, who come to render us aid, comes finally the Lord Himself.

Not at once. He first lets us get hold of ourselves. Then He sends human sympathy. And *among human sympathizers* He comes Himself.

“*Among those that uphold us is the Lord.*”

Then our best friends stand before and near us. Solicitous love exhausts itself, to find the word that can most deeply enter into our soul. But yet, they feel it themselves, down in your very heart, where the real wound is bleeding their word can not enter. Human sympathy can not reach it.

But God, Who created the heart, and Who wounded

that heart, can reach it, and there He enters in with a special operation of grace by the Holy Spirit.

And then something glorious transpires. A feeling oneself almost blessed in the wound of his heart, because deeper than ever otherwise in that wound is felt the glorious blessedness of God's love.

Then there is a spot within, of which we feel: there the very hand of my God buttresses up my sorrow.

And then you thank your friends, for their sympathy refreshed you so gloriously. But more ardently still you thank the God of all compassion, for His *compassion* was more than balsam, it was Manna by which the soul lives.

“A High Tower”

“THE Lord is a high tower in times of trouble” (Ps. 9, 10, Rev. Ver.). What throughout the Psalms does this ever-recurring word “tower” mean?

“Tower” has also the meaning of a room, of a hall, so that “high tower” taken in that sense, would mean a room in one of the stories of the house.

But the word “room” is not bound to that narrow interpretation of the present. In general it means: a place within which one withdraws himself, in which one can dwell, in which one can bear to stay. And if we consult the language in which David sang his psalms, and ask, what the sense was in that language of the word, which our translators have used for the “high tower,” it appears in every sense to indicate a place so far in the height, that there one could no more be assaulted.

“High tower” (room) is the highest place above the breastworks of a fortress. It is the highest place of the house, to which there is no stairs, and where no one can pursue you any more. It is, and that was its original sense, what the Transvaalers would call, a high, unapproachable top, high up on a rock, or mountain-ridge.

That here we refer to the Transvaalian use of language, is natural.

Theirs have been experiences, like those of David,

when for years he waged war against the troops of Saul.

He maintained the struggle through a series of years, with a small band of followers over against an over-bold and over-powerful enemy. But he waged that war in the rocky part of Judah's mountainous country. And he maintained the unequal combat for so long a time, because he had accurate knowledge of the high rocky parts of Judah's mountains, and the passes, which led to them.

When he was unable to hold out in the low places, he quickly withdrew to one of the steep tops, where Saul's warriors could not follow him. And there in the high regions, in those high places, on those high points of rocks he enjoyed again the restful and glorious feeling of safety.

There no one could come near him. There no one could follow him. There he was safeguarded against every attack. That then was his "high tower."

And now to express that the strength of his soul's confidence taken in its deepest sense was never in a creature, but always in his God, David referred to it again and again, that his "*high tower*" in the end always was *in the Lord his God*.

It also occurs differently in the Psalms. Not that God Himself is the "high tower," but that "the God of Jacob might put you into a high tower"; or as prayer: "Let thy salvation, O God, set me in a high tower" (Ps. 69, 29, Dutch version); or the statement: "The Righteous shall be set in a high tower."

But the thought goes deepest when the believer no more rejoices in a “high tower,” *in which* God puts him, but when he has found his high tower in *God Himself*, and now, resting in that glorious safety, out from His God he looks down quietly and solemnly, on what at first threatened to take his soul by storm.

The first, when God *sets* you in a high tower, but means, that the restlessness of the heart gave way to the restfulness of safety, and that gratefully you attribute this to God.

But when God Himself has become a high tower to you, you have withdrawn yourself from the turbulence and struggle in the tent, and as under the wings of the Lord, and there is blessed enjoyment again of fellowship with the Eternal Being Himself.

You have then come to realize, that the help of God and the upholding of your God, is still but a small part of the matter, and that the fullness only comes, when from the *help* of God you come up to *God Himself*, and feel yourself hidden in Him.

In two ways it is then come with you to inward deepening.

From the outward side of your grief you have gone down into the depth of your soul to the root of your grief. And in the same way from the outward side of God’s help you have come up to the Fountain of your comforting in the Almighty Himself.

And that in no false mystical sense, as though our soul could perforce penetrate into the Being of God. No creature can ever do this. And still to imagine oneself capable of this is sinful daring.

No, to be hidden in God, is being hidden in the *revelation* of God’s Being, in what Scripture calls *His*

Name. As when it says: "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower."

Hence it is a withdrawing of oneself in the virtues, in the compassions, in the outbeamings of God.

Even as we say, that a lily of the field blossoms in the sun, not as though thereby it is set in the *substance* of the sun, but in the fostering *outshining* of the sun.

And in this sense has found in God his high tower, not he who has entered into the Being Himself of the Eternal, what no creature either can or may, but he who has altogether been taken up into the glorious fullness of the outshinings of God's virtues and comfortings.

BUT the image retains its full rich significance.

"In times of trouble" the soul feels herself attacked. She is painfully and anxiously aware of being persecuted and pursued. She stands exposed to continuous assaults. She feels she is being *haunted*, and that the purpose is, to render her powerless, to unnerve and to disjoin her. She totters. She is exhausted. Darkness darkens her sight.

This is no ordinary anxiety, which she can face with *courage*, no ordinary fear over against which she can set *undauntedness*.

This is still possible, when she comes in conflict with people, with persons, with enemies of flesh and blood. But it becomes altogether different, when anxiety of soul arises from trouble of soul, from bitter grief of soul, from a wound in the heart that continues bleed-

ing, from what inwardly shocks our whole being and robs it of its steadfastness.

Then one feels himself attacked as by a hidden power. By a power of homesickness and sadness. It becomes an inward pining. And when one then observes that he is no more able, and that it overwhelms him, and that in that battle there is no defense, it seems as though hellish powers, or demoniac assailants pursue our soul. And that makes her stumble, and fills her with deadly anxiety.

And do not say, that these are mystical imaginations.

God Himself in His Word calls “Death” an enemy. Jesus rebukes disease. And the apostle testifies, that we do *not* wrestle against flesh and blood, i.e., with what people do to us, but with the mysterious perverting power, which comes to us from spiritual wickednesses in the air.

THIS would not be so, if you stood *outside* of sin, and thus could lift up an impenetrable shield against such demoniacal assaults.

But this *is* not so. This is not so with *any one*. And when in times of epidemic or bloodshedding by war, every one goes to church again, who never came at other times, it is only, because real anxiety of soul always awakens our sins again, makes the deep sorrowful experience and acknowledgment of our sins at once cry out again in our heart, and thereby makes the tie vibrate, which in our past and in our consciousness appears still so bitterly to bind us to demoniac power.

And along that way of our own self-reproach the anxiety then obtains its demoniac character.

Therein then roots that oppressed, anxious feeling of being secretly pursued, sought, and assailed.

Of course this differs in degree with one and with another. Also, while one is able to give himself an account of it, the other does not understand, what goes on within him.

Then the grief becomes, what is called, *lyrical*. That is to say, one's own trouble or grief or accident solves itself in the feeling, that the suffering of the world, that the misery arising from the curse, that the storm of human wretchedness now also breaks over our head, and tries to undo also our soul.

This accounts in such days for that feeling of dread and of faintness, for which we have no name, and which comes upon us as a flood, lifts us up from the ground of our life, and surrenders us as a playball to the most cutting apperceptions. Feelings which you can not set aside, over which you are no master, and which every time surprise you, do what you may to escape them.

And over against those waves of sorrow and over against those billows of grief, which then go over the soul, there comes from the heart comforted of God the glorious confession, that "in such times of trouble God is a high tower."

Surely, the Lord also *upholds*, and He *softens* the grief, in, oh, so tender a manner and with such deep compassionate Divine devotion. Unexpectedly a rose blossoms for you in the wilderness, a lily in barren places.

But that is *help* regarding the *outward* side of the

trouble, and in behalf of your immediate personal grief.

But what is here meant is still something altogether different.

It masters you at the moment, when that mysterious wave of the demoniac of the universal misery breaks against your wearied breast, and when in the broken wave your own personal sin rolls in upon you.

Then no comfort avails, then no help saves, then no support can uphold you.

Then there is but one way out.

Over against that wavebeat of curse and death, God Himself as the Fountain of life and the Source of everlasting rejoicings must take your soul up into Himself.

And this is what David experienced, and what every one experiences when he can say: *In God is my high tower.*

L

"That It May Be Committed into Thy Hand"

STRONGLY to gaze upon something, so strongly that the eye does not wander away from it, expresses altogether clearly, though it be in language without words, the desire to possess it.

Especially with animals, and among our domestic animals, with the dog, this is very evident. If he will what we call retrieve, and you hold the ball or stick in the uplifted hand, the ready animal has no eye away from your hand, as your hand turns, turns his head, and all his restless gazing has no other meaning, than that you will toss the ball, that he may catch it.

So is the child on the morning of his birthday, when he has no eye for anything save the toy you hold in your hand, and hears nothing of your words of congratulation, but solely gazes upon that present designed for him, as it were to look it out of your hand, that it may pass over into his.

He who in moments of high tension awaits a letter or telegram, and finally sees the messenger come, pays no attention to the man, nor to what he says, but solely to the packet, which is in his hand, to draw it as it were with his eyes toward himself.

The thoughtless traveler who lost his purse by the way, and going back sees an innocent child come toward him with it, would afterward not be able to tell you, what the child looked like and how he was dressed. The lost purse claimed all his attention. For this he

looked, thereupon he gazed, till it was safely back again in his hand.

And so, amid all sorts of circumstances, there is with every living creature that tense gazing upon what some one else carries or holds in his hand, the natural expression of strong desire, to see it pass over into his own hand.

And this bold image the Psalmist in Psalm 10, 14 (Dutch ver.) transfers to our Father in heaven.

Is there one of His servants on earth, who is bent beneath the load of anxiety and care, then, says the singer, God fixes His eye upon that anxiety and care so strongly, that at length he who carries it lets go of it and it passes over into God's hand.

“Thou *seest* the trouble and the distress,” is in the Dutch version expressed far too weakly. It should be: Thou hast no eye away from our trouble and from our distress. Thou gazest unceasingly upon it, thereby to express that we should pass it over into thine hand.

Thy Father eye like a magnet draws it out of our hand, that it might pass over into Thy Fatherhand.

Only so does this glorious ending: “That it may be committed into Thy hand,” come to its own.

Trouble and *distress* are not the same. They refer to the same oppression of soul, but express it from two different sides.

“Trouble” is the *active*, “distress” the *passive* in the suffering that overtakes us.

We in general express it in this way, that there is a part of suffering, with which we *struggle*; that is the

active, if you will the *trouble*. But there is also another part of the suffering, under which our soul bends herself down altogether; that is the passive; here expressed by *distress*.

Sore affliction has two extremities. The one from where it goes out of God's impenetrable counsel. And the other the point, where it enters into our human heart.

It is a dark stream which we feel pour over us, as going out from God, and from this side we make no effort of resistance. We are altogether passive and undergo it.

And that is what the Psalmist calls our *distress*. But we feel that dark stream rushing up upon our human heart and enter therein, and from that side the waters of our soul struggle and move in against it, and that is what the Psalmist calls *trouble*.

Neither the one nor the other can be spared us. Distress without trouble would make us succumb. Trouble without distress would bring us into rebellion.

And only when that selfsame suffering is struggled through simultaneously, and is undergone in distress of soul, is there that holy equilibrium, which brings rest and which comforts us.

WHEN that equilibrium still tarries, or after having been found, is lost again, there is something that cuts and wounds in the soul. And then the Spirit in us sings to us through ourselves, through our believing ego: "O my soul, why art thou cast down, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, seek thy rejoicings in His praises."

Then, led and impelled by the Spirit, faith comes to restore the equilibrium, and this always goes out from a seeking of God's fellowship.

"I set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved (Ps. 16, 8).

Not that God was gone. God is never gone. But a cloud had come in between Him and our soul. And now the eye of faith pierces through that cloud. The Omnipresent becomes present to us again. The eye of our soul discovers Him close by us. We become aware, we feel His holy presence as at our right hand. And it is again reality with us what we so often thoughtlessly have sung: "I shall then continually *be with Thee*, in all my need, anxiety and pain."

We again with Him, and He again with us.

No separation longer.

Toward us outflowing and toward us outstreaming fellowship. Underneath the everlasting arms of Compassion, and God's Hiddenness that hovers over our habitation.

IN this disposition of soul you become aware, that the eye of God gazingly directs itself to the burden of trouble and distress, which you have so bitterly to carry, and under which your soul succumbed.

It is as though not upon your somber musing, but only and solely upon that trouble and upon that distress that the Lord holds His Fathereye fixed.

And from this your God does not desist, till His end is gained, and at length you understand, that you

have to commit that heavy burden of your trouble and distress *into His hand*.

The Lord does not come to you, to witness your suffering, and to complain with the complaint of your agitated mind. He comes to take your trouble and your distress from you upon Himself. Only He does not take it perforce. You must pass it over to Him. And therefore He gazes so restlessly and so long upon the burden, that weighs you down, till at length you understand what that Divine gazing means to say, and with a last effort of faith you lift that burden on high, and before the face of your God you place it upon His altar.

And then the Divine eye expresses something, as though it would say: "Now you have been again as a child before your Father," and then the heart realizes again, how rich it is in possessing such a compassionate God as our Father.

A becoming aware, that God so to speak for one moment abandoned the stars, and withdrew His care from the whole world, to be engaged solely with us alone, and to concern Himself with our trouble and with our distress.

AND do not ask, whether from that moment on you are now *without* trouble and *without* distress.

For that were to break again the fellowship with your God, and not understand what God did for you.

That trouble, that distress, which He took into His hand, are not *neutral*. *Your* name is on them. The sadness of your heart resounds in them. The blood of *your* soul cleaves to them. It is *your* trouble, it is *your*

distress. A burden of suffering which belongs to you, in which *your* own past works its after effects, where the cords of *your own inner existence* lie braided through one another, and which, though now it rests in God's hand, is still attached with a thousand invisible fibers to your inner substance of soul.

It was indeed no external affliction, which loose, and independently of your heart, was laid upon you, and could be taken off from you, as a garment is divested.

In that trouble and in that distress is your own life, draws your own soul, undulates the stream of perceptions of your own heart, and that your God *could* take it into His hand, was just because He put the eternal arms of Compassion underneath that life of your heart and so from within out, by His fellowship with the life of your soul, established the fellowship with your suffering.

No sooner, therefore, can you by unbelief cut off His fellowship, than your soul sinks in again, and again becomes cast down. And blessed comfortings endure only so long as your God in you, and from the depth of your own soul, *from within out*, with Divine compassion, lifts up as it were the trouble and the distress, lest they crush you.

Therefore *without Jesus* there can never be real comforting in our suffering, simply because such intimate fellowship of soul with the God of all Mercies can not exist apart from the reconciliation of the blood of the Cross.

As "*saints and beloved*" we must lie at God's Fatherheart, so to be suffused inwardly with His comfortings, and *saints* we are not without Jesus. Without

Jesus we are nothing but sinful creatures, ripe for damnation, and not for comfortings; points of attraction for wrath and not for the compassions of our God.

Yea, more still, by asking that we commit our trouble and our distress into His hand, there repeats itself in the struggling of our own soul actually nothing else than what on Golgotha makes the Man of sorrows so uniquely great.

Then in the great, what with us operates after in the small, but always the one impenetrable mystery. God Himself Who takes upon Himself the burden of our sin, and so also the burden of our sorrow, lest under the trouble and the distress our forsaken soul should succumb.

“And Forget None of His Benefits”

By forgetting the benefits *of our God*, we sin against our own soul. And yet the temptation to this sin never lies closer to the door of our heart than in days of mourning and bereavement.

You agree, God’s benefits are never mechanical or for the sake of form, but are always seriously meant. We ourselves are frequently no deeper in our benefits, which we confer upon others, than with the hand, which defrays the cost. Our benefits we so frequently would rather not have conferred, and that we did confer them, was very often because for the sake of propriety we could not do otherwise. Not infrequently even selfishness has a hand in it. Give in the hope of getting again. And though it be, that also among men many benefits are shown, which sprang from the urge to do good and from the desire to bless, yet it also applies here, that even our best deeds are ever yet stained with sin. Perfectly holy is our love in what we do for others never.

But God’s benefits to us are always altogether perfect. The Lord is Himself always entirely alive in every benefit which He bestows upon us. They are always to the bottom aglow and tintillating with His Divine Love. To the last detail they are thought out. They are always put into beautiful and proportionate relation to our whole life and our whole being. They all hang mutually together and form together one wondrous

whole of interlinked chains of love. Every benefit of God is a pearl, chosen with fatherly care and with Divine ordinance strung in the necklace of love where-with He adorns us.

But just because God's benefits, one by one, are put by the hand of His faithfulness as twinkling stars in the heaven of our life, for signs to us of His faithfulness and love, it is so sinful in us, when we have no eye for them, and when under the sparkling of His fidelity we go along on our pathway of life, with somber eyes cast down toward earth.

That insults His Fatherheart. That hurts His Divine compassion. That is returning love with unthankfulness.

And consider this well. It is not enough in general to be mindful of the multiplicity of God's benefits.

Piece by piece, one by one, they must sparkle in the mirror of the heart and love and praise must be reflected back to our Father Who is in the heavens.

Forget *not one* of His benefits! (Ps. 103, 2, Dutch version).

BUT this, before we know it, is what mourning and bereavement of our heart goes in against.

O, the tempter of our heart does not let go of us even at the grave, and with holiest sorrow of our soul endeavors to divert us from the praises of our Lord.

He then whispers to us, that it is already much for our faith, if we do not murmur; that to rest in the will of God is piety in good measure; and that he who puts the hand on his mouth, and with a broken heart sub-

jects himself to the hard lot that came upon him, can already measure up to the most saintly.

And yet this is not so.

You submit, you put the hand upon your mouth, you are resigned, when you face a power, against which you can do nothing, and when you stand over against a majesty, which demands awe and reverence.

But such should not be the attitude of a child of God over against his Father in the heavens.

When in whatever need or mortal danger, be it for ever so short a moment, we give up faith in God's faithfulness and love, God is gone from us. Then He is no more *our* God, and the sparkling of His benefits hides behind a veil of vapors.

The world does not understand this. From her God can not have His honor. She can not address His Fatherheart with real understanding of His love.

And now God looks after His child, whether that child of His love stands sufficiently strong in the faith, even in the most painful hour to look up to Him with thankfulness and praise.

And only when such is the case, and faith thus gloriously triumphs over the sadness of the heart, so that at no moment the eternal faithfulness of our Father in the heavens is suspected, then there is rejoicing among the angels of God above, and a human heart on earth gives an echo to their song of praise before the Throne.

IN this let God's children strengthen one another mutually. And when every time again the tempter tries to draw away the eye, to have it gaze hopelessly upon the

dark spot, which broke away sweet life, then comes brother to the help of brother, over against this temptation, to put before our eye again the benefits of our God.

One alone would not be able to bring it to an end in praise and love. But then comes to our help the fellowship of saints. And that draws away the heart from mourning, and makes the eye of the soul interested again in the benefits of our God. And so by struggle comes triumph. And the end is, that a smile of love breaks through the tears again, and that from the wound itself of the heart praise and thanksgivings ascend again to our Father Who is in the heavens.

And that is just what in such an hour God looks for with His child.

Not a setting aside of one's grief. Not to camouflage mourning. On the contrary, the deeper and the more fully we sink away in our sorrow, the more God the Lord is glorified. The reality must be lived through and felt with clear, deep consciousness, in all its bitterness. And when from the sadness and mourning of a heart thus wounded in its deepest parts, finally there ascends a note of praise and love, of thanks and worship, then, but also only then, the Fatherheart above enjoys, what it asks of the heart of His child, and what is so aboundingly due unto our God.

AND considered more deeply it altogether depends upon the viewpoint, at which we put ourselves before the eye of the Lord, or if you will upon the question, whether at the grave of our dead complaint is in place, that

already now God took them from us, or rather the note of thanks, that He gave them unto us and so long spared them to us.

Are we the center of things, and have we enriched ourselves by creating for ourselves the possession of husband or wife or child, and does God now cruelly come in between to rob us of that glorious possession? Or was that husband, that wife, that child created by God, and by God alone, *His* property, and brought to us by His love, to rejoice therein for the time appointed of Him?

About the answer there can be no hesitation. For God created that husband, that dear wife and that precious child for His own Selfsake, that, first here and presently above, they should praise, serve and glorify Him.

Even when He brought them to us He did not relinquish the right of possession. They were not even loaned to us. But even while tenderest ties bound us to them, He merely intended that we should walk part of the way together, and on that way together serve and glorify Him.

Our possession of our beloveds was merely a very small part of their existence, an insignificant subdivision in their eternal existence, and hence our being together with them but a very small fragment of their eternal calling.

And when now in the great counsel of God the hour is come, that they have consummated the part of their calling on earth, and the place is open and waits, where they will now have to consummate their new calling, what else can there be in the soul of God's child, save thanks, that the new calling which now comes, is

still, O, so much more glorious, than the richest that was thus far finished.

ALSO the estimation of what we so sadly lost, comes only so to stand before our heart under the Divinely correct viewpoint.

He who with his heart continues to incline toward the side of his mourning, at every remembrance of what was precious in what he carried out to the grave, becomes ever poorer and more bereft.

But he who may see in his beloved dead children of God, on whom their and our Father has the first claim, with a relieved mind loses himself in all this wondrous treasure, which God had hid in those who went before, and in observing each new gift, which lay hidden in their heart, only becomes the more gratefully attuned, that so much wealth was given to surround him and to accompany him on the way.

It is then no more the greatness of man that we seek in our remembrances of so much that was noble, but in the full broad estimates of human excellence it is one magnifying of the Name of the Lord, who had so formed them, so unfolded, and so spiritually adorned them with the best of His heavenly adornments.

All conflict between God and that at first so cruel grave then falls away, and almost nowhere fuller than at that grave can the note ascend of thanksgiving and praise and adoration to our Father in the heavens.

NOTHING, nothing except sin makes here also the mists to arise. O, how we could wish with our whole soul, to have known our beloved dead without sin, and much more still, ourselves without sin to have enjoyed and possessed them.

Alas, such was not the case, and bitterly complains the soul discovered to herself about her own guilt and shortcoming. O, one would pray so ardently, that that living together might be done over again. How much more glorious it then could be!

And this God the Lord knows also, and therefore there follows in the psalm upon the striking words: "Forget not one of His benefits," that other: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities."

And so there is added to the benefits of the past, of which we should not forget a single one, this new, this most glorious benefit, that He our God takes away from before the image of our beloved dead every haze of sin, and makes us see them in the white raiment of God's saints, and that also at the grave of our dear dead He sprinkles us with the blood of the Holy Lamb of God. So far as the East is removed from the West so far also at the first opened and then closed grave doth He remove our transgressions from us.

And so everything from the side of God becomes love and faithfulness. Benefit of God what we possessed. Benefit of God what was shown to our dead. And benefit to our own soul in that wondrous Reconciliation of Christ.

Bless the Lord, ye His angels.

Bless the Lord, ye who went from us in the assembly of the just made perfect.

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

“Unto the Praise of His Glory”

IN every century, and sometimes in every half century, yea, even in a quarter century, there comes a new current in the manner of thought, in the disposition and in the tendency of spirits.

This is then called the “spirit of the age,” and he who wills to be or to become something in the world, is then on the alert, to take that timespirit up into himself, and thereby first to show himself to be what is called a “child of his times,” and then to become the “man of his times.”

In this urge to conform to the “spirit of the age,” there is in part something good, but also on the other hand a serious evil.

Something good.

For also in these currents of the age God’s work, which He carries on in the world of the children of men, reaches forward toward its consummation. Cessation in that work of God there is none. Restlessly as the waters of the river it moves itself along toward the ocean of consummation. And therefore there is constant development and enrichment of life. He who remains standing outside of this, impoverishes. To the new forms of life, which God continually creates, we, too, must adapt ourselves. He who will not stoop like a plant, but live as a man, must, for so much as these forms are concerned, as Da Costa sang so truly, be the “child of his times.”

See it with St. Paul. He does not copy Isaiah. He does not try to imitate David. He does not speak the language of a Moses. All that he writes is poured into the forms, manner of thought and expression of the Jewish, Greek and Roman world of his time. He wrote for his contemporaries, and therefore so that his contemporaries could understand him.

But that going along with one's times becomes a serious evil, when it comes down to a drifting along with the *spirit* of the age, and when that spirit of the age is accepted *without criticism*.

Is not the duty bound upon the heart in Scripture again and again “Try the spirits,” i.e., the spirits which are abroad in the different centuries, “*whether they be of God.*”

If you find they are, then follow that spirit in its mighty course. But if not, then resist that spirit, and let not your heart, your home, your generation be infected by it. Over against it put the Spirit which is of God.

Thus both go wrong in the church of God, as well the man, who by reason of what is wrong in the time-spirit, remains zealous of the forms, which are no more of our time, as the other, who that he may coöperate with his times, incautiously admits, the spirit which is not of God.

THIS also applies to the praise which we have to contribute to the glory of our God.

When from his prison St. Paul wrote to that very influential church at Ephesus, in his prologue he came back to it three times, that all God's work in His church,

and in the souls in Christ's church, was aimed at one end, and that this goal consisted of this, that we should be unto the *praise of His glory*.

First in the fifth verse, saying, "that God has predestinated us unto the adoption of children, that we should be to *the praise of His glory*."

After that in the eleventh verse, saying, that also we "have come to be an inheritance, that we should be *unto the praise of His glory*."

And for the third time in the fourteenth verse, glorying in the fact, that we "have received the earnest of the Holy Ghost, *unto the praise of His glory*."

The praise of God's glory is thus to the apostle no secondary matter, but the main goal at which everything must terminate, and toward which *everything* must be directed.

It is that praise of His glory, which God seeks *in* His redeemed and through His redeemed.

To praise God, to extol God, to make great the name of the Lord, to sing psalms unto God, to offer honor to God, is therefore the never-ending refrain, in which all the Scripture rests. It is the one mighty *Selah* of God's holy Revelation.

It is against this that the spirit of the age arrays itself.

Religion. . . . O, let it be holy unto you. Piety. . . . it must be an ornament to you. Only, you have no absolute need of it. The thousands upon thousands which live without religion, are, provided they are honorable citizens, nothing less than you. Surely, piety gives you a richer stamp, but among the birds of heaven is not the pheasant more frequently desired than the lark?

You are told, therefore, that you must keep your religion to yourself. That you shall not sing from the branches, but must hide yourself with your piety in a breach of the wall.

Your religion must be to you a matter of the heart, at most of your home, but otherwise you must not let it be noticed. Your song before God from the branches, would disturb the ease of others by the way and be an hindrance to them in the market of life.

Piety is an ornament, but one which, O, so mystically must hide, and which the world will generously glory in, provided it never perceives anything of it.

ALAS, there are confessors of Jesus, who halfway join therein.

Confessors these halfhearted ones can scarcely be called. *To confess* is not merely to come out for Jesus among like-minded, but to come up for the Name of the Lord with the world, with the opponent, with him who rejects Jesus.

And that these Christians shun.

“*Silent* preaching” is their watchword. To be a quiet one in the land, from whom no witness for Jesus has ever gone forth. Pious at heart, at most pious in the home, but going about in the world as a dog that never barks.

Something which is then advocated like this: that the noblest witness for the Savior lies not in our word, but in our daily walk, and that provided we walk honestly and keep peace with all men, and make it our highest honor to be kind, this “silent preaching” stands

on a line with what St. Paul advises the wife of a heathen husband, that she be quiet, that *without words* he may be won for Jesus.

Everything in direct contradiction to the teaching of Scripture, that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the preaching of the Word of God; in contradiction to the testament of Jesus to His apostles, that they must be *His witnesses*, His tireless witnesses, His witnesses to all the world; and in contradiction no less to the lofty note which sounds through all the psalms: Praise ye the Lord. It is good to sing praises unto our God. Praise is comely.

In contradiction also to the blood of our martyrs!

DID it never attract your attention, how painfully constant in Scripture the complaint of the faithful resounds, that *in the grave* no one can praise the Lord?

Take the close of Psalm 115: "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence; but *we* will bless the Lord. Hallelujah!"

Not the dead, but we who are still alive, who still have the voice in our throat, and therefore are still able to bless Him.

Does this say, that our dead have no insight into the glory of the Lord? That, mystically, in their hidden spiritual life, they have no ebullition of wordship of God's glory?

On the contrary, in all this *they very far excel us*. The veil fell away from before them, and they know, what has never entered our heart. Also nothing diverts

them. They are altogether one devotion, one adoration before God and His Christ.

But one thing they lack. They lack the bodily revelation. They know the spiritual praise of God as the angels know it. But they are unable in human language to bring that praise of the Lord to utterance. That only comes back to them after the resurrection, and then with a glory such as we on earth have never known.

NEVER say, therefore, that to the Lord our God it is the same, whether alone in the silence of the heart, or with loud voices blessing and witnessing we praise His holy Name.

A song that has no soul in it, as is often heard in public, or even a word of praise, in which no heart expresses itself, as you often hear this from painfully hollow barren orthodoxy, yea, that is singing and speaking untruth, by which the holiest is desecrated. Then thousand times better the quiet praise before God whispered in the soul than the tinkling cymbal of hollow metal.

But yet then only when the soul makes the lips eloquent and the tongue loose, then only when the heart empties itself in the voice of praise, and to the inward motion of the mind the *word* of worship and the *sound* of the song of praise couple themselves, is the *human* tribute of blessing and praising the Lord perfect.

In the beginning was the *Word*. By that *Word* all things are created visible and invisible. In the Word the Father uniquely generates the Son of His good pleasure. And therefore also to us men, by so much as we are

created after the Image of God, *that wondrous word*, the word that sings psalms and the word that witnesses, is given, *to tell* all the wonders of the Lord and *to speak forth* His praise.

In the lilyseed hides the lily that presently appears, but only when the bud is set, and the flower is unfolded, in that fragrant and snow white chalice is the greatness of the Creator revealed.

So in our heart, in our soul, in our nature there is life *in the germ*, and only when what fills the soul goes out in the sound of praise, the lily chalice of our inner life unfolds itself, and exhibits the beauty of its inner glory.

And therefore the blessing, the praise of the Lord, which goes forth in the voice of men, is the consummation of all blessing, the perfection of all praise, which God seeks of His creature.

The angels still have this in advance of us, that in their spiritual being they offer *pure* worship, they worship with a *perfect* motion of spirit.

This God's children on earth still lack. Impure is and remains till our death the purest urge of love, that from our innermost parts ascends to God. Also our prayers call for atonement, if they are to stand before the Holy One.

That impurity falls away with dying, when the body of sin is shaken off in death, and herein is the *provisional* glory of God's children who went from us, that now in the soul they know holy, pure motions of worship, which are no more tainted by sin.

But however high this may stand, it is not yet *the highest*. And that highest only comes for them and for us, when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice

of the Son of God, and shall come forth, and if they died in Jesus, not merely from a pure soul, but also with the voice of perfect purity of tone to sing the holy, holy, holy before the Throne of our God.

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